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中二病でも

恋

がしたい!

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「?ケーキ?」

「あー、聞いて聞くんじゃな!」

!!



「もう私には通用しないよ。」

これは揺るがないから」

Chuunibyou Demo Koi ga Shitai!

(She has Chuunibyou, But I Want to Love Her!)

Volume 1

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The Prologue is about When I was Cool!!

This might be a little sudden, but I have a confession to make. I, Yuuta Togashi, suffered from chuunibyou when I was in middle school.

Chuunibyou, which affects people while they go through puberty, isn't something that affects people physically or emotionally. No, it's a much more pathetic disease. It's the kind that makes people see evil all around them, even when they're in public, and I don't mean something as simple as being in a rebellious phase. For example, someone might think so highly of themselves that they feel possessed of some kind of unique, mysterious power. I, too, thought I had something like that. So when I became the self-titled "Dark Flame Master," I would drive both friends and girls away, using my catchphrase "be engulfed in the flames of darkness!"

Even though those times are just memories now, I feel like I should just die In middle school, that kind of phrase would make me look super cool, but I wouldn't dare try to use it in high school. It's totally lame.

Another thing I used to do in middle school was wrap my arm in bandages in order to seal my power during classes. When I would tell people about why I wore bandages, about the Zero Organization (an organization that helps train people with the potential to gain superpowers), and other things I had invented, they would just laugh at me like I was an idiot.

Of course, I was completely serious. I'd go around mumbling things like "Those jerks don't know a thing about me.... Soon they'll be engulfed in my dark flames," like I was some hero who hid in the shadows while the world revolved around me.

Please, kill me right now.

Or should I ask if anyone else has experienced that kind of life? A time where you'd "awaken with a new purpose in life" with an ability to protect the world?

I thought I looked so cool shouting catchphrases full of big words at the top of my lungs

"Classified Sorcery Enchantment! Light of Darkness, arise from the Recidivist! Just go and extend despair and misery to our foes! That's the might of justice!"

Now that I think about it, using light of darkness? Justice from despair? I was merely a violent person who looked to get into a fight, wasn't I? With my flames of darkness, I was certainly prepared for one too.

Oh there's still more to talk about. I believed I held a magical force in my right hand so I drew "demolish" on it and a shooting star on my finger. Through training, I believed I would be able to levitate in the air. Now I can see that signs of the chuunibyou virus were all around me.

In this way, I acted like a fool all throughout my second year of middle school. I would abruptly go "You... What are you doing?! My power is fading!? STOP IT!" during class or comment "This is Closed Space..." around my desk when no one else was in the classroom. Naturally, my grades plummeted.

Once the summer of my third year came around and high school entrance exams were around the corner, I packed all my delusions away and began frantically studying. Due to the lack of free time I had, I started recovering from this disease. I became a calm, reserved student and while I wasn't as "cool" as I once was, my grades started to rise rapidly once I used my brain.

And so you might say, well it's obvious you passed your entrance exams; you weren't suffering from chuunibyou anymore. Currently I am a first year high school student and none of my friends act like idiots or could be classified as

having chuunibyou. Those days with my classmates from middle school are over. I was able to get into a pretty good high school and not many of them made it.

There are a few students here from that school, but I'm not familiar with most of them. Since I likely had the worse symptoms of chuunibyou, they probably don't know who I am. I was just another person in the crowd for all they know, which serves me right.

Oh well. The past is behind us. I rescued myself from my idiocy and that's all that matters; no one here knows about my dark past.

Eventually, in a new environment, with new friends, two months had flown by. They were very fun in an elegant sort of way.

I couldn't help but laugh during our entrance ceremony. Our principal came out on stage screaming the school song while wearing one of the uniforms. Besides that, I've been looking forward to enjoying an ordinary high school life. There were so many clubs that I had no idea existed (What in the hell is sepak takraw anyways?). Regardless, it was quite fun coming to this school as its tradition of free study suited me well.

In the end, I chose not to join a club so I could focus on my studies. It looked like it was going to be smooth sailing for me, since I had made plenty of friends in my class. Right now my favorite thing to do is just hang out with them. I had finally regained what was really important after getting over my chuunibyou illness.

I know, it's hard to believe that the "cool" me who was alone is now spending time with his friends. That's because while I'm hanging out with my friends, I forget all about my dark history and just have fun.

Unfortunately, a sad event had to occur.

Well, maybe I should say it was bound to occur. I was once a patient of the chuunibyou illness, but had made a spectacular recovery. Or so I thought.

It was chuunibyou. Definitely.

And so, beginning with that event, I was bound into a contract with Rikka Takanashi.

Chapter 1 : Rikka Takanashi

“All right, our class’s first cutest girl competition has begun!”

“What?”

I couldn’t think of any other way to reply to the guy walking beside me. What else could you say when they’ve announced a crazy contest? We were at the end of May, so it had nothing to do with the mid-terms we had taken earlier.

“What do you mean ‘what’? This is an epic battle to see who the cutest girl in our class is! It’s self-explanatory man!”

“Then say it like that next time! Besides, how do you plan on getting all the guys to vote?”

“Ah, I should’ve known you’d say that. Anyone would be concerned with the basic principal of a poll: getting responses. Well, no need to fear my good friend. Everyone else has already given me their answer and so now you’re the only one left, Togashi. So your vote goes to...”

“Why do I have to vote?”

“I’ve gotta have all of the popular guys’ choices after all. Wouldn’t be much of an evaluation if it were just my opinions.”

For some reason, hearing someone call me popular made me happy. Unfortunately, his compliments were ending there. He continued his passionate speech,

“Everyone’s already told me who they thought were the cutest in our class, so, tell me your girl!”

“Hmm...”

As I began to think about it, I groaned in response. I had come across the real Makoto Isshiki. As you might guess, he acts just like how his name means: devoted to everyone. He's an interesting guy.

If asked what devotion brings to mind, you'd think of an athlete or a guy who'd cut his hair to precisely 5 mm long, but those types of people tend to be quite rare. But with how proper he wears his uniform, you could easily get that impression of him. I don't know why he did, but he joined the disciplinary committee. He has a habit of saying "Stop your whining! You're disrupting the school!" when he's checking people for rule violations. And then there's that bamboo stick he waves around... I don't want to think about what he does in private.

But there's also a part of him that loves women. Well, love is putting it lightly; he's the type of pervert who hounds after women. It's such an essential part of him. I mean he came to everyone in our class to ask them about our girls and their charms. He really loves women, but I wouldn't say he means wrong. He just loves chatting about cute girls; it's ordinary for him. On the other hand, I can't help feeling something's wrong when the same guy obsesses over indecency in public, refuses to nap during class, and yet chats about girls all the time.

And so my perverted pal and I met instantly after enrolling in this school. We've spent quite the time together since then. I can't say we've done anything exciting, just chatting in the hallways and eating lunch together. You know, the types of things you do with your friends at school. I wouldn't consider him a close friend, but you can still feel the burning power of male friendship!

And while I was reflecting on the burning power of male bonding, we were walking home from school underneath the sun's glaring rays. The first big event of everyone's high school experience, the first midterms, were just over

and I felt like humoring him and giving a reply to such an easy question. After all, it doesn't matter what I say.

"How about it, boss? I know there's a lot of pretty lasses in our class, but you can trust me bro. Come on, tell your pal who the cutest of the bunch is."

Apparently the burning power of male friendship was getting to him as well. The stress of the situation was starting to kick in. I didn't feel like responding after he said that.

"Ahhhh let me see... Who's the cutest in our class? Well, I'll have to check during one of our classes and see who the cutest is. There's no way I could answer without looking around first!"

"You're a gentleman until the end! Bro, you gotta teach me a thing or two."

As if I couldn't see right through that cheesy reply. Damn these responsibilities of male friendship. I felt I had to give my vote after that horrible acting job.

"Oh... I don't know her full name though..."

"O...K...? She's in our class though?"

"Well, yes, but I'm not sure how to write it."

"I got you bro. Here's the 6 I happen to know quite well."

"What?! You're certainly a prodigy when it comes to knowing everything about girls. What kind of an inspection did you do this time!?"

"Oh... I just checked for information when looking for data on repeat offenders."

He's certainly earned the name of pervert.



“Hehe, here’s all the info I gathered!” And with that, he reached into his bag and pulled out a mysterious memo pad. You could tell it belonged to him as you flipped through the contents.

“Let’s see. If you say Azami-san, Kannagi-san, Takanashi-san, Nabatame-san, Nibutani-san, or Hirakata-san, I’ve got their proper characters.”

“Amazing. I feel like I got a glimpse of how abnormal this hobby really is. Well, what happens if one of those girls happens to have a different name than the one you have?”

“Hmm, well, Kannagi-san’s first name is Kazari, like the breeze that rings a bell. She gets quite pissed if you call her ‘wind-chime’ from what I hear.”

“Certainly the wealth of personal information....”

I could easily picture him being a private investigator in the future.

“Ah. Hehe, were you after Kannagi-san’s interests and e-mail address? I can get more right now if you’d like.”

“...Let me see what’s in that pad right now!”

He’s even more perverted than what I thought, but he’s also quite the jokester. To be honest, I wouldn’t mind having some information on the cute girls in our class. Even if I couldn’t find a use for it during my lifetime, I’m sure I could profit on it somehow.

“If you want it, then confess who your cutest girl is. I wouldn’t mind sharing it with a buddy.”

I looked up. I had a feeling this would happen somehow. But something’s bothering me: how will I be sure he wouldn’t tell any of the girls who I pick? Better to ask before I tell him who I pick.

“This... this is confidential, right? You promise you won’t tell anyone? If you break this promise, I’ll cry my heart out! Th-this is just the girl I think is cutest! Don’t take this literally!”

He just nodded his head, saying “You got it man.”

“I’d have to say it’s Takanashi. You know, the one that sits in front of me. Well... I’m not completely sure it’s Takanashi. I’m Togashi, so the “ta” would be in front of me. I think I’ve seen her write the small and bird characters, so it’s probably in the “ta” category. I’d have to be in the classroom to check though. I don’t know the rest of her name.”

“Ooh, a Takanashi-san vote! Rikka Takanashi gets one added to her total! I also had to check on how her name was written, so I know what you mean. If you play around when writing small bird, you get Takanashi. I don’t think it’s derived from a bird playing around in the sky like a hawk or else you’d get Takanai instead.”

You’d expect no less from this devoted pervert. If he doesn’t know something about a girl, he’d go investigate. But I guess it’s time to study though we just had our mid-terms. If I didn’t do well on them, I’d have to go to tutoring.

As he was saying, “So Takanashi-san eh? You have to admit, she is cute,” his expression looked like there was something else left unsaid.

I enquired, “Is that all right?”

Thinking about it, I gave the name of someone I didn’t even know how to write. But this looked like there was something difficult to talk about when it comes to her. For a guy who loves to talk about girls, he certainly looked like he didn’t know what to say.

I was pretty indifferent to girls during middle school so perhaps I didn’t know what you need to look for in a girl. After all, I wasn’t that important to

anyone during those years. I'm pretty sure I didn't make a mistake; she fits what I want in a girl. Seriously, I'm quite lucky to be assigned to sit behind such a cute girl.

Isshiki answered with the information he had on Takanashi. "Well, I've not heard her speak, but she's got a very cute face."

"I see. Well, if you look at her face, it'd remind you of a child when they first come into this world. Wait... does that mean she's like one of those organic lifeforms built for human contact, you know, a humanoid interface?! She's one of those pale beautiful girls whose emotionless face doesn't react to anyone. And then there's that bandage she wears over her eye. From there we go to her small frame, which the uniform makes her look like an absolute cutie. I don't think it's exaggerating to say that she was what they had in mind to make our girls wear a blazer! And then there's that slender body that just gets me going. I just can't help but adore that loli face and small breasts. Yep, she's obviously the top person in our class based on looks."

I thought I had been pretty clear about her good points, but it looks like the guy in front of me didn't comprehend what I was saying. I knew her looks pretty well, but all of that is just on the outside... that's all I talked about, wasn't it? Isshiki's quite the talker when it comes to looks, but we've not talked about what her personality's like.

So what do you like about Takanashi....Why is this such a stressful question? I decided to strike at the core of the matter.

"So that's the outside. Is she actually a horrible person?"

"You're a good listener eh? Alright, I'll tell you what I know, but this is just a rumor, alright? Warning: there's a chance it might destroy your image of her."

You know it's probably not a good rumor if it took this long for him to say something. Then again, it's just a rumor. It could be something minor that was spread around by some other girls who were jealous over how cute she is. Everyone knows those types of girls aren't beautiful on the inside. Yeah, that's how it's gotta be. I've seen Takanashi these past two months and she's usually alone. She'd make an easy target for others to pick on. Maybe she's one of those people whose destiny is to befriend those who are alone. Boy, that type of person really appeals to me.

"I just wanted to make sure you know the situation. Promise me that."

"Gotcha. Thank you for the information. It's just a rumor sir. It's not a good story sir."

"You got it."

"So really..."

And so as he began to talk, his face started to slacken as if he was telling a ghost story.

"Takanashi-san... Rikka Takanashi-san gradually began to change while she was in her second year of middle school... Up until then she was this bright cheerful girl who enjoyed being around her friends. You could say she was something like a mascot to them... But something changed. It was like she was possessed. She began saying strange things out loud... And so..."

"It became a Japanese folktale?!" I was wrong. It wasn't a ghost story after all.

"Well, I get the feeling she suddenly separated from her friends like she had realized they were horrible people. She began acting rebellious and like she had lost her mind. There were some questions going around if she had multiple personalities. That's how bad it is."

I feel like I've heard this before. Must be my imagination.

"Well, if true, that would certainly be a surprise to everyone who knows her. But that's just me thinking about it from a normal perspective."

"You... Thinking about it normally...? When a girl suddenly changes her character like that... Did you ever consider it might be chuunibyou?! To me there's nothing better than a fair-skinned beautiful girl who constantly acts properly!"

In the past two months I had forgotten that word, so hearing the phrase "chuunibyou" came as a shock to me. As we were talking about the information he gathered, it didn't cross my mind.

"...Chuunibyou, huh? Didn't you say it was a rumor? You couldn't possibly believe that, right? Besides, wasn't the contest about good looks?"

"You don't think a cute girl like her could have chuunibyou, do you?"

That shock would stay with me for at least a week. Instead of giving him a reply, I began sweating. This wasn't the kind that happens in the humidity of June though, this was an oily sweat. Chuunibyou? Isn't that supposed to be bad for you? Though I've had personal experience with the disease, I can't say that I think it's a bad thing. It's not like someone's come down with a quadrillion measles. Give them some time and they'll get over it. Hell, just look at me.

But how should I respond to him? If it was the old me, how would I respond? Don't we mature as we get older? I'm different now. Should I condemn it immediately? I think that's how it's supposed to go.

I don't know if Takanashi is the type of person to come down with it, nor did I ever think I would come across a case of chuunibyou now. What misfortune!

Or is it fortune? After all, she is cute.

“So, just something I’m wondering about Takanashi-san, but in the rumors, did they ever say anything about her using magic or changing her body into a black cat...?”

“I didn’t care to inquire. But is that new info?! Is it? Then is it chuunibyou after all! Hmm, those people can’t really use magic nor can they transform, but they pretend to have magic and super powers!”

“Well, that was just something I was wondering about. But if it’s true, then wouldn’t that double a girl’s charm?!”

“ ... ”

Sigh. At least reply with a joke or something. Personally, I think that would double her charms.

“Just a joke, huh? Keep in mind that it’s still a rumor. We don’t know much about her. Why don’t we know more about her personality? Maybe we should keep that in mind.”

“Who would have that information anyways?”

“For anything relating girls I can easily ask the guys in our class or my upperclassmen in the disciplinary committee! There’s always news going around. But if we don’t know something about someone, or we want to know more, then we just get more info when their uniform stands out. They ‘disrupt’ the school, and we tag ‘em. It’s two birds with one stone.”

That’s abusing your power! But I’m sure that all the guys would shift their attention to find out more about a girl we know little about. It’s something all men have in common.

“So Togashi’s vote goes for Takanashi-san. Hehe, all that’s left is for me to vote and our class popularity contest is OVER!”

Tell me. Have you seriously confronted all the guys in our class and collected their votes? That's such a wonderful talent. I almost feel like I should watch and take notes. Thankfully that urge went away in seconds.

"Incidentally, who did you pick? It's not fair if you know mine and you don't tell me yours."

"Hmm. I love all the girls in our class! Their cuteness is off the charts, right? Well, relative to the rest of the school. But the rest of the school has quite a few cuties too. Looks like our cuteness ratio might be higher than normal. The second and third years are also amazing. Especially that dance club. The only way you could describe their dancing is pure ecstasy! "

His love goes over all boundaries.

...Wait! He didn't answer my question! Tell me! "So... You didn't say which girl you think is cutest."

"I didn't? Well, I really think all of them are cute. Well, she doesn't show much popularity from the rest of the guys, but I love Megata-san. Why she's not popular, I don't know, but I choose her.... Or perhaps Nibutani-san."

"Hold on, the class rep?"

If I recall, isn't she called the class king by the guys? As for me, I've got nothing connected with her. Wait a minute; I don't have any kind of relationship with any of the girls in our class. Outside of when I pass a handout to Tokise-san, I don't talk to any of them.

"Yep, our class rep, Nibutani-san! She certainly fits the definition of cute. She's got my big point, morals, and her face is cute too. She's tall and slender; perfect to be a model. Besides, I get the sense she'll talk to anyone regardless of what they're like. Being able to talk to anyone easily is something a class rep is supposed to do, right? She's got the attitude to being a true leader; that's why I

think she's so marvelous. I also think she's got a little sadistic side to her as well. I think I'd be able to withstand that shift in character! Of course I could never say that to her!"

That's a huge shift from the shy person I talked about. Though, if I have to act as the straight man, I would comment that I've only seen her with many cute friends by her side. I think I'll hold it in this time.

"Hmm, I can see how she'd be on good terms with all the guys. I guess that's why she's popular."

"Ahhh, the class rep, no the class king, is amazing. I want to vote for her, but I'm going to wait a bit. Once I vote, it's finished after all. I'll look at everyone's opinion and tally who's the cutest girl. Wonderful! This contest is just wonderful! We'll have to have a second contest soon! Once this is complete, I plan to give a handout announcing the results sometime later."

And as he said that, he tapped me on the shoulder.

"Well, I'll see you around at the usual arcade!"

I turned my head as I started running. Before I knew it, I was at the branching roads on the way to my house. While I turned and saw him off, my legs had started heading home.

"Wait? With thirteen guys in our class, and fourteen girls, how can he make a ranking?"

That question just now came to mind.



It was about ten minutes before first period the next day. The bell had rung and it would be just a little while longer before our teacher showed up. As you'd expect, the classroom was quite busy. Inside that busyness, there I was in the middle of the classroom worrying over the conversation I had the previous day.

Rikka Takanashi. The doll-like girl who sits in front of me. Her hair is dark black and short. From behind, it almost looks like glass.

She still wears her blazer to school even though it's gotten warmer. She merely takes it off and puts it on her chair revealing a blouse that highlights her arms. While I'm not an expert on fashion, her dark belt really accentuates the school's plaid crimson skirts. It looks like that belt is gothic styled, but again, I'm not a fashion expert. Who would sell something like that, it looks so heavy! If you just take one look at all the crosses she has as accessories, you'd instantly think "goth". And looking through the chair in front of me, I see black knee-highs on her thin legs. Yep, goth. I don't know if she's injured, but she's wearing a bandage running from her left wrist until her elbow. In between parts of the wrapping, you can see her white skin. It's almost kinky.

But I'm concerned about perverts looking at something else. If you look closely, you can slightly see a black bra underneath her blouse. I fear how it'll get their motors running.

Summer is the best though...

But enough of that, I think we can see that the inhabitant of the seat in front of me hasn't changed, can't we?

In these past two months, I've been watching her from behind. During all this study time together (ONLY IN CLASS!) I've not seen any change in her. No strange voices, no weird walking, nothing. Then again, I've not even tried to talk to her once. She might turn out to be chatty, though, I really doubt that.

And so I continue doubting myself. It... wouldn't hurt to talk to her about this... right? Oh god, my head starts hurting even thinking about it.

"OW!" As if God himself was punishing me for having all these perverted thoughts, I had a bag directly hit me in the face.

"Oh, I'm so sorry! Did I hit you?"

I looked up at the person walking by. It was our class rep Nibutani. Shinka Nibutani. I found out her given name yesterday during that conversation about popularity contests. It's another name that leaves a very strong impression.

Spontaneously, I lifted my gaze from her legs to her face. So tall! It's definitely her defining feature. She's easily the tallest girl in the class, though it's hard to tell when they're all sitting down. She's either as tall as or slightly taller than I am. I felt like I lost a bit of pride.

Unlike Takanashi, the girl in front of me wears a clean uniform with no accessories. Nothing stands out, though her skirt does look just a bit short with those legs. With her deep blue stockings, she's the perfect image of an elegant class rep. The socks don't match though.

If I have to say she's lacking something from the whole class rep image, it's glasses. Glasses are a symbol of intelligence in a class rep, but this one doesn't wear any. As for brains...I can't tell just looking at her. But there's no mistaking it; our rep definitely gives off that "class rep" image.

"Ah, I'm alright."

"I'm so sorry. I was careless when I took off my bag."

"Don't worry. I was distracted too, so it's my fault for not noticing it."

"Is that so?" And then a smile rose on her face. A sadistic smile. She had turned evil right in front of me. That could just be my imagination though. Oh well.

"Why were you distracted?"

Huh? We're still talking? This is surprising. I thought you would go to your seat once you said "Is that so?"

"Eh... Ah... Well... Don't we have math in first period today? Since we're getting our tests back, I was worrying over what I would do if I got a bad grade."

"Oh... But you seem like the kind of person who wouldn't worry over something like that. Guess you learn something every day."

"It's not just that. I'm concerned they won't be any different than what I did in middle school."

"So you're worried you won't do better huh? Well, this test was a bit more difficult than what we had in middle school. Did you study to the best of your abilities?"

"Huh? Abilities? While I'd like to have some kind of cheating power, I didn't use anything like that."

Nibutani paused, but here comes her ever present smile again. "Huh... Hahaha. It would be nice to have that kind of power, wouldn't it? I didn't think you'd say something like that. Oh well, class is about to start. See ya!"

And with that Nibutani went to her seat. Well...how should I put this? Though this was the first time we had a conversation, I now understood what Isshiki said about her. His comments about a relaxing atmosphere and her sadistic smile were true. Plus her comment about me worrying over something was amazing. I'm not sure how I could bring that up in a conversation.

Almost immediately after that conversation ended, the bell to start classes rang. At the same time, our teacher came in and started speaking at the podium in her loud voice.

“All right, all right! Class, let’s start today by handing back your midterms. Oooh! Were your first exams in high school a little rough? Did you bit off a bit more than you could chew on the math exam?”

Everyone began to shiver. Prior to class the room was energetic, but now everyone was deathly silent. That’s how strong our teacher is. She said everything with a bright smile on her face. While I thought our school was unique from the entrance ceremony, her introduction was just as unique. She yelled out “My motto is to make any time stress time!” and then put it to work.

She usually wears a suit and she’s a bit smaller than the male students. I’m not sure who’s the more mature when you put the two together. Not only does Nanase Tsukumo serve as our homeroom teacher, she’s just as chipper as our math teacher today. Since she looks so young and is new, she’s very popular. Incidentally, the students tend to call her “Nana-chan.” I might have called her that once or twice.

“EH! Stop it Nana-chan! I couldn’t bear to see my horrible grade!”

“Don’t make us take extra lessons!”

The guys behind me were already complaining.

“Yes, yes, you don’t have to say it out loud! Remember, if you study hard, you’ll be fine! Today’s test may not have gone so well, but if you follow what I teach you, everything will be alright! It doesn’t matter if you have to take extra lessons, just do your best!”

Cutting right to the chase aren't you? Well, your math lessons are more challenging than the ones in middle school, but her teaching style is so good, I actually thought it was kinda easy.

I told Nibutani differently, but I actually expected that I would get a pretty good grade on this test. Well, I just won't tell her what I got if it was that good.

"Let's go! When I call your name come on up! Ootsu!"

And so we'd go up to the podium when she called her name. The reactions varied between sadness and joy between all the students when they came back to their seats.

Naturally I'd be next after Takanashi was called. I passed her on my way to Nana-chan and felt my stress levels rise. My high school life would never be the same after I get this test back.

"!"

Let me see that again. What the? Have I ever seen a grade like this before? No, I haven't. Let's see, my best grade so far was an 88 I got back in elementary school. But right beside my name was a 95 on this answer sheet. What a fantastic grade! I guess studying makes me cool as well!

Since this sheet was obviously an extremely valuable object, I wanted to guard it as if it was passed down from a distant ancestor as I walked back to my seat. I turned around and...

There stood a huge barrier in front of my seat. What... what is this? There was this weird aura that was preventing me from moving forward. This... This...

I tried to bypass this barrier by turning my body and moving forward, but I ended up making a mistake. Perhaps it was caused by this aura, but I fell face first. I could hear a huge echo from all around the classroom.

I caused a huge outburst. Crap! I didn't mean to!

I heard Nana-chan ask softly "Hey! You all right?" behind me. Due to how embarrassed I felt, I couldn't answer her. My body wasn't getting up that easily after that fall. It took all I had just to lift my head.

And then I became a lucky pervert.

In front of me, that big wall I mentioned earlier was Takanashi and her short skirt. Looking up, I had a premiere viewing spot for that triangular piece of fabric that all guys dream about.

"Ah...."

When I wasn't looking, I had collided into Takanashi and fell down. So of course, the panties I'm looking at have to belong to Takanashi. Wait, this is bad!

And while I'm apologizing to her mentally, Takanashi remained emotionless as she sat at her desk. Just a little while ago I was gazing at Takanashi. Hmm... I guess she really likes black, doesn't she?

Wait! Something's off here. Don't you get the feeling something's out of the ordinary? Usually when this happens the girl is all "You... saw them?! DIE!" or "There's no way I would show you my panties!" or "I'm not embarrassed you saw my panties!" This is a big deviation from the script.

And yet Takanashi didn't respond at all. She's emotionless.

It's such a mature response from her. If this had happened when I was in middle school, I'm sure I would have been flabbergasted and couldn't say anything.



But that huge barrier; could it be her isolating herself? It looks like she's about to cry at any moment. Maybe she didn't get a good grade on the midterm. While I can't say it'd be due to friendship, it might be a good idea to stop celebrating so much about my grade.

I can't help but worry over something like that. Besides, I was isolated a while ago as well. Who knows, maybe if I walk over and ask "What did you get?" we might become friends. I should also apologize for getting a glimpse of her panties too. I've heard it's quite embarrassing for girls when a guy sees their panties. Well, in games at least.

With all these things to talk about, I could choose the best time to speak with her. I just hope that rumors don't spread given my bad luck today.

"Ah... Ooh...oh... my eye..."

Suddenly, Takanashi began pressing against her right eye as if it was in a lot of pain. She laid on her desk.

"Ah... Oooo... Ooo....It... it..."

All of a sudden my head cleared and my body started moving on its own. I rushed over to her desk and asked "Are you... okay?" No response.

You'd expect people around the class room would be chatting about what was going on, but this time everyone was in shock over what happened. Not a single voice could be heard. Were they concerned over my fall and Takanashi's groans? Did they care if she was alright? Did the surprise render them speechless? Were they just mean people? Did Takanashi not have any close friends? I didn't know anything.

But for some reason no one said anything to her. I could feel the resentment in the air. Isn't this strange? Shouldn't you be worried that a classmate is in pain?

Damn it to Hell.

“Ms. Tsukumo, I’m taking her to the nurse’s office!”

With only a “sorry about this” I picked Takanashi up and put her right arm over my shoulders.

“Let’s go.”

“Oooh”

Again she pressed against her right eye with her left hand and we started to leave.

“Ah... Sorry about that. You all right? You gave us quite a scare. Well, we’ll leave it to you Togashi-kun!” Nana-chan sounded really surprised as well. Eyeing the situation, she saw us off. As for the rest of the class, I don’t know and I don’t understand what they were thinking.

Ten minutes after class started, Takanashi and I had left the classroom.

En route to the nurse’s office, we were in the landing between the third and fourth floors when Takanashi suddenly cried out “Ahhh... my eye... it’s resonating...!” and collapsed into my shoulder.

After she fell into me, my left hand had to turn her body in order to prop her up. Or rather my left hand had to prop up Takanashi’s small tender areas. Once was shocking, but twice in one day? Call me lucky or just selfish, but she didn’t react to my left hand as she was moved.

Actually, holding her in this situation isn’t normal. Am I living through a situation like the one in that series when glasses were involved? No no no, that’s just a delusion.

“Are, are you alright? How’s your eyepatch?”

“Ooh...you, Are you... the same as me...?”

Not if you're talking like that. Looks like she's one of those girls who weren't immunized and now speak in random incoherent phrases.

“Ah, eh, somehow, I guess.”

Whoa, my response surprised me too. I answered affirmatively, or rather that I am the same as her. Somehow Takanashi understood my reply and moved my hand nonchalantly.

“Yes... It had to be so. You...I was waiting to find you... I have spent many years searching but now I find you here.”

She's talking about me.

Wait, what?

“Waiting”, “waiting.” I know that phrase. I know these words quite well. Trying to stick these lines into various conversations or trying to act like a leader by sounding like this. Wait... it can't be...

“Oh, thank you for waiting for me. That aside, is your eye okay?”

I tried to bring our conversation back on track. If she thinks I'm that kind of person...

Let's just try to not bring that up.

“Did you see my eye?”

Now look. I asked if your eye is alright. That's not the reply I expect back! Well, I didn't really get a chance to look at it. Is there something special about it or some meaning to it?

Unless... it's that.

It began to sink in. The girl in front of me most likely has chuunibyou.

I didn't have any problems when I heard the rumor, but seeing it in person? It's a bit weird. What's the best thing to do in this situation?

I don't really have an issue with anyone having that disease, but how should I act around them? It doesn't make sense. Wait a second; this is how those guys felt around me back in middle school... So that's how they felt. Anyways, let's figure out what's the best thing to do in this situation.

"Ah, that. What about it?"

"Oh."

And so Takanashi lift her eyepatch, revealing pale white skin around her eye. A golden light, one unlike any I had seen before, began to shine as if I was at the entrance to a golden city.

It was a color contact lens. Hold on a sec, while I'm surprised, it's quite different from the black pupil on the other side of her face.

"It's... amazing."

Is that a really contact lens? While that impudent thought came to my head, I didn't feel it was proper to suddenly ask such a question. I suppose this is something a chuunibyou patient would like, right?

"And with this, our contract is complete."

"What?!"

"Now that your eyes have met my Devilish Truth Stare, the terms have been fulfilled. You and I are now bound. From henceforth..."

Ah! This is just like my old kind of chuunibyou! Hold it, Devilish Truth Stare?

I was surprised at how short the contracting period was. With how the rest of the conversation was going, that line was quite the jaw-dropper. But that wasn't all that she had to say. Amazing. It looks like she's able to provide the backstory instantaneously. Oh glorious Takanashi, let's just leave it at this.

"Hold on a moment...."

Whew, if I didn't take a breather there, I would've gone into a relapse. I could already feel some lines like "Wh-what do you mean I'm now in a contract with you, you bitch!? Hehe, such a being was this close to me all along. So, what do you want to do? Shall we go destroy the world?" being held in my throat. That's definitely the dangerous option to choose.

But thinking about it like this isn't good for me either. Regardless if I want to return or not, I've already been cured. Thinking about those events already makes me feel like I want to die. I have no intention of contracting that again. It might be a bit sad, but I think you get the gist of things.

"Sorry, but I've already been cured from that."

"Cured?"

I was starting to re-gain my composure. Those nasty gasses inside me were starting to settle.

"Ah, two years ago I was like you, so I understand where you're coming from. Having another person to hang out with you in your made-up situation sounds like a fun time. Our upperclassmen would say 'knock it off' but I think it's good for you."

I hoped Takanashi understood what I was saying. Making up stuff is fun. I know exactly quite well the joy of spending time designing new worlds and such, but then again, I don't want anyone going down the road I went on.

Those made-up creations soon became a bother to the people around me. That's the biggest problem with chuunibyou. It was only when I was able to look back on my actions that I became able to think about the times when I would do harmful things like disrupting class. I'd cry out "Don't come in! Don't come in! Whoa!" in the middle of class so we wouldn't have class. Now I can realize what I was doing.

Back then, I wouldn't care about what others were doing; I'd just act as freely as I wanted. I was quite the problem child, wasn't I? I can safely say you're blind to everyone else's feelings in those situations. Regardless of whatever I was doing, I was so egotistical that I never once thought about apologizing for my actions.

But she has the same scent as I did. The same kind of evil eye chuunibyou too. She's so similar to how I was. There's no wonder she would look at me and think I was the same as her. I thought those bandages were familiar too.

Somehow I don't get the sense that she'd be the type to disrupt everyone in the middle of class though. Maybe it'll happen someday and I wouldn't think it strange, but I doubt it. It's only a hunch, but I have a feeling that someday Takanashi will look back with regret over the things she's done just like I have. Time is so short. You don't need to waste your precious high school days turning them into memories you don't want to have.

As a former chuunibyou patient, I don't know how many people I bothered, but I have a hunch she doesn't know the amount of victims (besides me) that she's troubled. That's why I have to say this, in a chuunibyou manner.

"How about this, instead of forming a contract with me, wouldn't it be better if you could rely on me?"

Yeah, I just can't leave you alone. Well, I didn't mean it in some kind of patronizing manner or to make you my underclassman. You're more like a chuunibyou sister to me.

"But the contract has been finalized."

"You mean, you're really enforcing it?"

...That's just a little bit bothersome. Just how far will she go to enforce it?

"For the time being, let's head to the nurse's office."

"That's where I said I was taking you!"

After making this up Takanashi stood straight and began to head down the stairs, leaving me behind. Well, isn't she energetic.

"Why aren't you coming? Did you use all your energy?"

"Ah, something like that. I think I'll take a nap in the nurse's office."

I've gotten just a bit dizzy thinking about it. Napping in there sounds good to me. And so I followed behind Takanashi's shadow and we quickly went to the nurse's office.

Chapter 2 : The Phantom Before My Eyes

And so the (I don't know if you could still call her) sick girl and I arrived at the nurse's office on the first floor. Usually you have to be sick in order to come here, but by the time I could mention that, Takanashi was already inside. There wasn't any use avoiding it, so I went in too. Thankfully there wasn't anyone else inside.

Rumor has it that there's quite the handsome guy in charge of this place. Probably a lot of beautiful girls come by just to have him check them out. I've never once had a reason to come in here like they do. No colds, no stomachaches, no injuries, nothing. So as far as I know, it might just be a rumor. Since this would be my first time meeting the guy, I'm really glad that he wasn't here today.

"No one's here."

As Takanashi said that in her monotone voice, I turned around. "Looks like it."

"What should we do?"

"Well, doesn't your eye hurt?"

And now she reacts! The person behind why we came here finally realized that fact and went to a desk to search for eyedrops. Seriously, I can sympathize with your eyes hurting, but if it's true, you wouldn't be able to hunt for medicine!

"Oh, I found the eyedrops. Here, I'll apply them in the gold one."

It's probably quite dry, but I'm not sure that it's a problem.

So while holding the eye drops, I glanced at Takanashi.

“Are you sure that is holy water?”

“Huh? What do you mean holy water?”

“Any other fluid besides holy water has a probability of damaging the Devilish Truth Stare.”

I’d imagine it’d hurt more than your eye. Ouch. It’d be like you had a zombie’s eye.

“Hmm... Can you not judge the efficacy of that liquid? If so, please provide your judgment.”

Somewhat frantically I answered “It’s holy water!” and hoped it didn’t sound fishy. Who knows, it might actually have some holiness.

“My eye is fatigued...I understand now. It is appropriate for use. Apply it.”

“What kind of half-hearted evaluation was that?!”

Please tell me you know the difference between medicine and religious treatments. Regardless, here we go! Wait, I’m just a high school student. Can I really do this by myself? I have no choice in the matter though.

Takanashi moved her head back in a defenseless position. Though my heart was rapidly beating, I tried not to shake my hand as I moved the drops over her eye.

“You, stop moving!”

“Got...it...Pour now....”

“Stop that strange sound too!”

“ugh.....ugh...There’s still some left....?”

“You wouldn’t want it to keep hurting, would you? I can’t leave it at this!”

Lather, rinse, repeat for the next ten minutes.

Finally I was able to put enough drops into her eye. The cause of my rapid heartbeat had stopped. My body and soul were worn out from applying those drops... Seriously, is it time to take a nap yet?

"It is restored. You have my gratitude Yuuta." Takanashi sit up on the stool and politely bowed her head.

Wait, Yuuta? Why that? Did I introduce myself to her? Even more, why my first name? The questions kept coming.

"Ah, no problem. But how do you know my name?"

"It was part of the contracting process. You put it in. That is another part of my contracting powers."

"Contracting powers? Are you serious?"

"Serious."

My heart started to beat again. Nononono, that's bad. Powers? That's got to be a lie. Somewhere, somehow I must have slipped and told her. It wouldn't be a miracle if she remembered my first name. But hey, if she does have those kind of powers, then she'd know other things about me.

Let's try this.

"Amazing. Now, tell me anything else you know about me."

"On the day of the school entrance ceremony, you went to the rooftop. While overlooking the sports grounds, you said 'Wahaha! This world is mine! Hahaha! With my powers, this world is MINE!'"

"Guh!"

I can't respond to hearing something like that that yelled from such a sweet voice. So creepy. And yet I know I'm going to ask a question I'll deeply regret.

Simply, how did she know that? Wait, let's look at it differently. That would be something I'd say during middle school. Of course I'd yell those lines from the rooftop then! Someone would be able to confirm that.

But why would I say the same thing twice?

Middle school me, I wish you would die. Just jump off the roof and die. Well, the rooftop is quite high and you might be too scared to jump. Ah! This is so embarrassing!

"I know other things about you. You wear a t-shirt underneath your uniform with the character for 'darkness.' There are other things too."

"What...all... do you know?!"

I don't wear that shirt on a P.E. day. No one should know about it. How does she know about my favorite t-shirt that I take great pains to wear in secret...? This surely can't be one of her powers, can it?

Oh god...

"These are my powers. They are the ones that bind Yuuta and myself to a contract. Isn't it natural for the party holders to know about each other? Didn't you realize that? I still know much more about you."

MORE?! Even still, you're enforcing that contract? After hearing proof of your powers by saying all of those embarrassing things about me, I'm not sure how much more I could take. It's a matter of life and death and I'm pinned in a corner!

But you know, just because I'm in a contract doesn't mean I'll relapse (I feel my calmness returning already). It might just mean that the only thing I have to worry about is her condition prolonging itself. While that doesn't sound so bad, I'm not quite sure about it.

"Still not convinced? You..."

"I... got it. For now I understand that I am bound in a contract with you."

"Oh."

I'm stuck at her pace. But I can't do anything else but agree to that contract. I promise I won't relapse; I'll just be an injured party in this situation.

"Well, let's see. Now this contract you keep mentioning, what exactly did I form a contract with you for?"

"So you could call me Rikka."

"So I could call you by your first name?!"

That's a relatively simple thing to form a contract over. Just why did we make one for it? There's a lot of questions popping up in my head about that time. Oh well, at least it's a simple thing that I agreed to.

"So... Rikka-san... would be alright?"

"No. Rikka."

That was a surprising big denial there. Looks like she doesn't want to be addressed with an honorific. Up until now I've called her Takanashi. Could I get over my reluctance and address her solely by her first name? I might be too shy to do it. This is our first time talking to each other, yet I'm supposed to relax and call her Rikka.

"Nnn...Rikka?"

“What?”

“Just saying it out loud.”

‘What?’ Are you an airhead? If you’d think about it, certainly someone would try to practice saying it after being told that. Ugh, I’m already tired of this girl. Extremely tired. I know it keeps coming up, but I still can’t stop comparing her to myself in the past. I too would’ve acted like that.

“So, is that all we agreed to? Since that’s done, I think I’ll go take a nap.”

“That was only part one. What’s next is a secret.”

“There’s still more!?”

“It’s a secret.”

What? How could it be a secret!?”

“It’s a secret.”

I don’t get you at all... I just want to lie down here and not have to worry about these things.

That isn’t happening. I have to think about these events in real-time so I can respond correctly. No doubt, if I lie down here, she’ll continue the contract and do who knows what to me. While that’s on my mind, there’s no way I could take a nap.

So it looks like my best choice would be to go back to class. All right, let’s go!

“Well, I’ve listened to what you’ve said, but I think it’s time for you to rest Rikka. I’ll head back to class now. I’m sure you’ll recover somehow.”

“Huh.....?”

Rikka looked noticeably disappointed. It looked quite different from the usual expression that I see from her. With her looking like that, there's no way I could leave her behind. Ah, what to do?!

And as the atmosphere became heavy, someone barged in to lighten the mood.

"Ah, you all right in here? I was quite surprised by what happened earlier. I've not seen anything like that before, you know."

As Rikka was preparing to comment to Nana-chan, I quickly rebutted with my own statement. "Well, it was a bit dangerous. It happened so quickly that I've already forgotten what happened."

But it was quickly ignored. Apparently, every bit of my existence in this room has been ignored. Nana-chan looked at Rikka with her incident easily apparent on her mind.

"Ooh, that's an interesting gold color! Is it infected?!"

This isn't the time for jokes! Seriously, that's our newbie teacher for you.

I tentatively explained. "Teacher, it's a colored contact lens."

"No, it's the Devilish Truth Stare."

"Ah, is that a new type of disease?"

I was overturned and now our teacher thinks Rikka's made-up creation is a new disease. Our third party looked extremely happy as she wouldn't let go of the idea Rikka was sick.

I was the only straight man in this comedy group, so it was up to me to set things straight. "Think about it normally and you'll see that it's a contact lens. Takanashi-san is giving you a sixteen year old's explanation, Teacher."

Now I'm the mother. Nana-chan looks confused. Is she seriously thinking Rikka's correct?

Rikka had returned back to her usual expressionless mode a few moments ago. She began to respond to our teacher in that same mode.

"The Devilish Truth Stare is my characteristic power. I fear our teacher is not able to understand that. Naturally, you can see that this is no mere contact lens. This is proof of the difference between the human world and the demon world."

Can you see now Nana-chan? Doesn't that just strengthen my argument? I can't give up now. If what I just heard is true, then Rikka-san would have to be a demon.

"Ah, Ah, well, umm... Takanashi-san, perhaps you're just a bit tired from what happened earlier..." As you could guess from how she was speaking, Nana-chan had not regained her composure. "Yuuta, would you please tell me about Rikka?"

"Ye-s! I'll explain, teacher."

Damn this contract's compulsion is strong. Even she called us both by our first names.

"What's going on with Rikka?"

"Ah... she... It's like this."

This is definitely testing my endurance. But yet somehow I'm surprisingly stubborn, or rather inconsequential. From how Nana-chan's face looks, we've already left her behind. What should we do about that expression?

Looks like we need a change in plans.

“Ah, that’s right. What’s happening in class Teacher? Are we still in first period?”

“Oh, um, don’t worry about it. After I finished returning tests, I did a brief explanation of questions and then we had a self-study period so everyone could match the answers.”

As she answered, Nana-chan re-gained her usual composure. Looks like this change of topics worked out.

For at least one moment that is.

“Now about Rikka.”

“You’re asking again?!”

Damn! She’s certainly a persistent person, isn’t she? What kind of expression must I be making? It can’t look that well! I’ve been completely worn down.

And so I replied,

“Rikka is...”

“What?”

“Already better, see!”

Let’s go with the idiotic response then. Perhaps she’ll be befuddled.

“Ahaha, Very, very entertaining indeed. You two make quite the pair!”

“We’re not a pair. He’s under a contract. Though I am grateful you found it entertaining.”

Rikka-san was glad to be called entertaining?! What a twist! Though she didn’t have a happy look on her face, I got the feeling she was feeling quite proud of herself. Maybe that’s what she had in mind all along.

On the other side, Nana-chan was still smiling. You could tell she was trying to hold back her laughter. Well, it looks like she's still got a wrong impression.

"Err, teacher, it's not like that. Can't you see we're not a two-man stand-up group?"

"I got you. It's alright, it's alright. I can see you're not a group!"

She definitely got the wrong impression of us. Get your laughs ready! Here comes the current chuunibyou and the past chuunibyou couple comedy routine!

No! That tag line is not what I should be thinking about at this moment!

"Ahaha, my stomach is hurting! Oh right, before I forget, here's your extra questions. These are the ones for the re-test. Do your best, okay?"

While she was still smiling, our teacher reached into her bag and pulled out three pieces of paper. She handed them to Rikka, who looked like she knew the end was near. Well, to be fair, she didn't have any expression, it was just a feeling you got from her.

Her hand began to shake.

"Teacher?"

"Is there a problem?"

"Are these a requirement?"

"Yes they are. After all, Rikka-san... you did get a 0 on the test."

A ZERO?! I wasn't even sure you could get that grade on a test. Even if you write something down, you should get higher than that! Well, it is math, but I don't remember it being that hard of a test for me. There wasn't anything I

couldn't solve on it. Memorize the formulas and use them to make calculations. It should be easy, even for the girl in front of me.

"Um... don't you think that's a bit challenging Teacher?"

"Oh, sorry, sorry. ...Ahaha! How about this? Why don't you help her out Yuuta-kun? I wonder if you can help Rikka-chan study better."

"Eh? Me? Isn't that a lot on my plate?"

That's seriously a lot to drop on someone so suddenly without letting them think about it.

"Well, you did have the best grade in the class. If you can't do it, then no one can!"

"Number one?"

Rikka and I were both in shock. Hey! Even when I'm studying hard, I'm cool! Finally, the honor of being best in the class has come to me! Even without being called "Bespectacled Boy", I got his status!

While I was swooning over in absolute joy, I didn't notice Rikka was already planning something in secret.

"Yuuta, the second part of our contract is this."

"Hmm?"

"You have been elected to teach me to study."

"When was I elected?"

"From before you were born."

"You mean I only existed until now so that I could teach you to study?"

"Yes. That and to call me Rikka."

That huh... Isn't she just adding things to it as she goes along? Will she ever fail to think of something? This is going beyond just calling you Rikka and it's starting to become a habit. How many times are we going to do this?

Well, I don't really have a problem showing someone how to study if they don't know how. My problem is if I have to instruct this evil eye chuunibyou patient. But now it looks like she thinks I was created as a hero solely to instruct her how to study. Oh, and to call her by her first name too.

I'm growing more and more nervous now that she's pushing the boundaries of that contract to study together. But even though I don't want to, I know I can't neglect her wishes.

And so, against my concerns, it looks like I'll look after this evil eye chuunibyou patient. Maybe being similar or contracted was my fate in this life.

I think Nana-chan is counting on me too. Though I have no idea what made her think of having me spend time with this chuunibyou patient, maybe having some after school study time with the very cute Rikka isn't...that bad.

"...Guess I can't complain. I'll help her study."

"As expected Yuuta. You have been the human selected for this task."

Somehow I see a small smile on that expressionless character. Is this a privilege of being contracted? Oh well, I'll definitely pitch in for that smile.

"Then, go study. I will begin restoration here."

I take back what I said.

Chapter 3 : After School Study Time Starts

The bell sounded to signal the end of first period after Nana-chan and I left the nurse's office. We parted and I made my way back to the fourth floor to re-join my classmates. Unlike my middle school, there were quite a few students who would be in the hallways during the break. As I passed by the landing where Rikka collapsed, I began to wonder how the class was reacting to the earlier events.

When I arrived to the classroom, I noticed it was noisier than usual due to more people staying in. Usually, most people leave the room and it's quite barren, but today it looks like we have a full house. With that going around on my mind, I rejoined the class.

"What's going on? Did something happen to shut everyone up?"

Everyone was at their desks studying. There was a note traveling around for people to write on, but as soon as I said something, I saw it get shoved into a desk.

"Wel... Welcome back! Looks like you triggered the first flag man. Her signs went up and you acted just like any lead would do."

"Not really. If someone was hurting as bad as she was in front of you, you wouldn't sit by and do nothing. Don't read too much into it."

Actually, I can't say she's truly suffering from chuunibyou or my earlier outburst similar to someone with it. Since I can't talk about either of those, I definitely can't mention that she's re-cooperating (really playing hooky) in the nurse's office.

"Read too much? There's nothing else to read man. You went through step one on how to win a girl over. I'd bet my life on it. Well, I just hope she's not suffering from chuunibyou like we talked about."

“Huh!?”

I couldn't help raising my voice when I heard that word. Rikka obviously suffers from it, and while I know that she's the genuine article, it wouldn't be right for me to disclose that information to everyone. I really doubt they'd think kindly of her if I said that.

“Yeah, didn't you hear about the hot topic? You didn't see everyone chatting away about her? Man, it looks like those rumors about Takanashi-san might be true.”

“Rumors? Didn't you say yesterday that she had just changed since her second year in middle school?”

“Well, there's more to it than that. Didn't I tell you yesterday? We were wondering if it was true that she wore a mask and said ‘This world is the afterlife!’ to a teacher.”

“I didn't hear about that and I'm not sure if I want to hear about that!” Again, I ended up raising my voice. There's not really another choice when I could smell danger coming to me. What the hell, man? Afterlife? We're all dead? And even talking back to a teacher!

“Well, let's see. Would Rik, Takanashi really wear a mask and say that to a teacher?”

Rikka's contract (brainwashing) had gotten to me. I've already started to call her by her first name. Thankfully I was able to stop in time. If he had noticed I changed how I said her name, I'd never hear the end of “flags” or “steps to love.”

“Oh, well after you guys went to the nurse's office, a letter was passed around. That's why we started chatting.”

.....Letter? Well, I did think that piece of paper being spread around was a bit strange. I understood why people thought that masked girl was in our class now. But why would that be a topic for discussion? Apart from my recent outbursts, I can't think of an event that would involve a masked girl. Could it have come from a rumor when Takanashi was in middle school that became slightly exaggerated? Nevertheless, wearing a mask...

"Ah, I got that feeling from how the class was acting. But why do they think she wore a mask? Surely everyone noticed that her eye was hurting a while ago, didn't they?"

"They did. Knew you were sharp. I thought it was weird too at first but, back when I was collecting information, I heard something that shocked me. Apparently some masked person wrote 'Takanashi.'"

"Ah, I see why they thought so now. Since it's a strange name... What kind of an idiot are you?! If that's the case, then why wouldn't you just ask her!?"

That was certainly leading the idiot, wasn't it? I couldn't hold back my shocked feelings after all.

"Well, I didn't think it was right to meddle in her business for just a joke. From what I heard, the girl was short and was only masked on the left side. The right eye had an eyepatch over it. What's more, both left and right arms were wrapped in bandages. Not to mention she wore a choker necklace and had tons of accessories on her. See, doesn't that sound like Takanashi-san? Now you can see why I thought it could be her."

Shouldn't masks cover the whole face? Maybe it's just a preconceived notion, but I have heard about a person in an opera house that wore such a mask too. But masks, as well as bandages, hiding parts of a person makes them look quite suspicious.

“So you’re saying that Takanashi would have been wearing all of these things.... Well, that’s certainly not the best rumor to be spreading around about her, is it?”

Actually, she does. Certainly she’s wearing a lot of bandages now. I’d think pretty much everyone else but her would find those types of attire quite repulsive. If there were quite a lot of these chuunibyou patients acting around at a school, wouldn’t that school’s reputation drop? Then test scores to get in would drop and numbers of applications would fall as well. But really, that type of thing doesn’t affect us already here.

Wait, it does affect me. I have to see her myself after school for tutoring. If she doesn’t do well, then it reflects poorly on me.

“Oh, you two are studying now eh? Even if it’s her, you’re still moving up the steps of love man. But if these rumors are true... you’re in trouble buddy.”

“Well, it’s not like that. Didn’t I say that I just couldn’t leave her alone? To tell you the truth, she reminds me of myself.”

“Seriously?! You didn’t tell me about that. Spread the word!” And just like yesterday, his face brimmed with vitality. He pulled out his memo pad at mach speed 3.

Will he look down on this, I wonder. “Well, it’s a private matter, so I can’t really talk about it. Sorry man.”

“Ser.....seriously? Oh well, you gotta keep those things private.”

And that energetic face he had up until now turned into one of immense disappointment. Sorry, but I don’t think I could talk about her grade or Evil Eye chuunibyou.

I wasn't getting out of that private matter so easily though. "You're surprisingly determined about this. Either you're pretty upright, or there's a way you could benefit from it."

"It's not determination. I know you want to know, but I can't say it. You said upright, but wouldn't anyone with the bare minimum of morals keep a secret? It's called privacy for a reason; if anyone who wanted to know knew about it, it wouldn't be private. I know I'm in a difficult position keeping it from you, but I can't tell anyone. Sorry man, I'll guard this for the rest of my life."

"So profound.... Well, I guess that's a good quality to have." That was a delicate response, but I'm feeling a bit embarrassed over here. "So you're saying that, even though you can know what's going on, you can't tell anyone."

You said it. B-I-N-G-O, Bingo.

"So apart from you not wanting to leave her alone, what's going on? I don't think you have that much in common with Takanashi-san."

We just finished talking about that. Why repeat it?! The option of ignoring him came to mind. I'm not sure he hasn't been playing catch-up this whole conversation.

"Hmm, outside of not wanting to leave her alone huh? If I thought too long, we wouldn't have much time left before class, so maybe... personality?"

"Oh, I got it. Quite the interesting scoop. Takanashi-san and Togashi are quite similar in personality...? Got it." I heard some kind of "uh huh" sounds as he nodded his head.

"Um, what kind of thing are you writing from what I said?"

"Personality resembles Togashi. In short, looks like she does have some feminine charms."

“What the hell?!”

“Well man, you are pretty feminine. Though if you’re just acting that way, that’s too scary to imagine. I can just picture yourself as this white collar office worker now.”

“AHHHHHH!” Backing off for now. Crap... Don’t go there man.

“Hmm, it’s disappointing! Why weren’t you born as a girl?! Ah, but maybe you’ll do if we put you in female clothing...how about it?!”

“Rejec-ted! I was born as a super wild boy!”

He replied immediately. “I doubt it.” Do I really give off a feminine feeling? I am a Virgo after all. Damn you! I want a new birthday!

“Phish, I doubt anything would have changed!!

“You say that phish really nicely!”

“Gross! Enough! Class is about to start.”

“Ah, you cut off that conversation yesterday and now this one just like a girl would. Well, it’s all good. Togashi, you’re giving that feminine impression more and more.”

Without giving any reckless remarks, I headed to my seat. With the earlier event in the nurse’s office and now this, I’m already tired and it’s not even second period. Feels like sixth has just ended. Maybe I should go to the nurse’s office to get some rest. Then again, Rikka is already there. I should’ve known already; the seat in front of me is empty.

She does remind me a little of how I used to be. Not just how she talks, but she acts like how I used to as well. I would play hooky in the nurse’s office if I had the chance.

Besides, I've looked at her. I've been looking at her for a while. When you've got an interest in a girl, you tend to keep an eye on them. Thus, wouldn't I know something about her? She's constantly been on my mind.

But who would talk with Rikka? Perhaps she's lonely. That's probably due to how she has chuunibyou. It's not out of the ordinary that she'd try to talk to others like she did with me today. Those lines cause more stress than I'd want, but they're still somewhat memorable. She was able to hear what I said from the rooftop after all.

I'm sure her pain in her eye was just an act. With the timing of things, I wouldn't be surprised. I wouldn't go beyond a guess though.

But, don't I want to spend more time with Rikka together? Sooner or later, her chuunibyou will go away and I'll be there as the one person who understands her. It doesn't have to mean I'll relapse into my old self. Well, sticking around her as her contracted might delay my complete recovery a bit, but I don't mind. Yeah, I think I'll stay friends with Rikka.



Even though my class was noisy when I was walking back, things quieted down and lessons were over before I knew it. It was soon after school.

It was a gloomy after school time for me. I wouldn't say I was melancholic, but it was close. Usually I head home after school! So while I was trying to get rid of that habitual feeling, I did my best to refuse leaving the grounds.

I really like my house, so naturally I'd want to go there. Yeah, that's right. That's why I'm part of the "go home after school" club. In middle school I would

go to my club for a little bit, but now that would take a miracle from me. So when everyone in class goes to their clubs, I feel emotionally moved, or should I say really impressed, by those who stay here.

I gave envious looks at the people who were heading home with no club activities to do. I'm not jealous of them; please don't get the wrong impression.

And so, after seeing everyone from class off, I was alone in the classroom. Right, this was our after school studying time. Well, I did agree to do this. I should have some patience. Though I was feeling somewhat gloomy, I was also looking forward to this.

I had originally left together with everyone, but I came back, saying I had some errands I had to do. Then I walked around as I waited to be alone in the classroom with Rikka. Speaking of her, I thought she might come back shortly after classes ended, so I looked for a sign she would return. After all, there would be no one else here in here but me. I waited for her from the bell signaling it was after school...

And it was as if I never left. Even about 15 minutes after everyone else left the classroom, there was no one else in the room but me. I was starting to think she was incredibly slow at meeting someone when I suddenly hear the door open.

I turned my head watched as the super energetic Rikka started to head towards me.

"Sorry I kept you waiting."

Not shy are we? Rikka, operating under casual working hours, started to head towards my seat.

"You took the whole day off?"

Rikka sat in the chair across from me and turned to face me.

“Yes. After forming this contract with you, my Devilish Truth Stare was completely exhausted. It was the first time I had used its power to make a contract, so I wasn’t able to control it. Thus it was necessary to stay there and rest for a period of time.”

I still think you were shocked and wasn’t able to deal with the results of your test. While I could comment on that and give her a fatality, I’ll pass for now.

“So you were a full-time resident in the nurse’s office today...”

“I was hidden inside the bed and did not leave. The nurse was a little frightening, but he had a handsome face and his voice was soothing. He had the aura of a monster. I was able to evade him and exit while he was cleaning.”

I didn’t get to see him, so I don’t know if he’s exactly handsome, but of course he would be a monster to Rikka.... So all good looking men are monsters in disguise, huh? Or something like that.

“Yuuta should also be cautious of Nikado-sensei. Nikado is certainly a suspicious name indeed. While I was hidden, there were several girls that stopped by. Perhaps he indulged on their blood?”

“Hm...hmmm...” Imagination is quite a scary thing sometimes. Now he’s a vampire.

“Well, let’s leave it at that. Let’s hurry and get to why we’re here. Study time starts now.”

“.....That would be a tactical failure.”

“Hmm? What?”

“I will not be able to study at the current moment.”

“Why would you say such an unpleasant thing? Is your stomach burning?”

"I see. That too would be a failure."

As if finishing a classic joke, Rikka clapped her hands without batting an eye. You're too simple.

I began thinking about how to teach this zero grader. Let's start by seeing what level she's at and then begin from where she doesn't know something.

"Alright, well, first we'll start with some easy problems, alright?"

"Problems....is this a test?"

Rikka had a nasty look on her face. She must really hate math. Well, she did get a 0...

"Don't worry, this is a starter set. Alright, let's go. You throw three dice simultaneously. What is the probability that the numbers you see equal 8? See, isn't that simple?"

"This is allowable."

After she said that, she pulled a cute black cat pencil case from her desk. Why a black cat, I have no idea. From there she got a stylish little devil pencil and began writing in her notebook. So particular over these things! But make no mistake; it was this pencil and the lack of studying (or lack of proper atmosphere) which helped her achieve that illusionary 0....

I looked on as Rikka began to draw a dice with her pen. Well, I guess this could be important for solving the problem. The next time I looked, she was writing something. Wait, I'm not sure you need to write how to roll a die. How little imagination do you have? I'm not sure chuunibyou could do anything for this.

As she went on, she began to draw an arm, body, and then a face as she continued sketching a portrait. She's quite talented. I'm sure if we made a "dice throwing girl" tag on pixiv, it'd certainly be a popular illustration.

Soon ten minutes had elapsed. So now...

"Um, Rikka? I'm sure that's enough calculation time..."

"I do not know the answer."

"Huh? Oh, so if you don't know the answer, you'll just play around?"

"Different. I think about human feelings and then I draw people as I see them. It is nothing beyond imagination. This person is 'does not know.'"

I don't know what you're thinking. Please, tell me how we ended up at this point.

"Well, I get the gist, but are you just not able to do the problem?"

"...I have not yet begun to show my true power."

"I get your enthusiasm, but that's just words." In the past, I would often say something like that when I didn't know something. I'd say that rather than admit my true feelings. Usually I'd look for a way to escape the situation afterwards. I better hurry before Rikka thinks of that too.

As I was reminiscing my older days, Rikka suddenly stood up from her chair. Looking down at me, she said loudly,

"Yuuta! Trouble's arrived! The Dark Organization is...!"

"What?! You know about the Dark Organization too? But though you know about them, I can't let you leave."

"A..A..."

"Sit down!" As she was a good girl, Rikka sat down again under my command. She looked just like a dejected dog who was told to wait until they could eat. Wouldn't some gum help lift her mood? It does for our dog.

"Alright, Rikka! If you do your best and get this next problem right, you'll get the absolute best gum you've ever tasted in your life. If you try to escape, you'll only have more problems."

Let's quickly try the carrot and the stick, or rather gum and additional problems, strategy.

"Allowed. You may continue."

She suddenly regained enthusiasm for working. Before anyone knew it, her face became ready and she began twisting around her pencil. She was telling me to begin anytime.

"You didn't know how to solve the previous problem. I want to start by showing you how."

"Ah, Okay."

She really didn't know how to solve it. So I began teaching her the process used to solve that problem. Though she said "I understand" when I was finished, I really didn't know if she truly understood how to solve it. It's worrying.

"Completed. I have acquired this process. It is mastered."

"Alright, then let's do a problem similar to the earlier one. Let's see... if I throw two dice simultaneously, what's the probability they'll show a total of 3? Alright, give it a shot."

"Allowable."

And just like last time, she began to put pencil to paper. Thankfully, this time she wasn't drawing anything. Did I worry for nothing?

While Rikka was working, I too was solving the problem. It is..... 1 in 18. Though these types of problems aren't my strong suit, I should be able to teach her how to do them. While I was solving it, Rikka had stopped writing things. As soon as I looked over and noticed it, she said,

"Yuuta, can I look at my cell phone for a second?"

Sounds more like a command than a question.

"Your cell phone? Sure, but don't do anything extravagant with it.."

Something about this triggered something like a memory. I agreed to it, but I wasn't letting her off the hook.

She reached into her bag and pulled out a black cell phone with all sorts of decorations. Seriously, from the amount of things on there, I felt like mine was behind the times. If that's a decorated cell phone, then mine has to be retro. Well, a retrone (retro cell phone).

I didn't see anything like a cute heart, but is that an angel's wing fluttering around the phone? I couldn't say whether or not it looked like a high school girl's cell phone, but it definitely looked like a chuunibyou's unfortunately.

She continued to stare at the cellphone. Thinking I was a bit too serious over the matter, I looked over at what she was doing. Though it was impolite to look, I noticed that she was using the calculator function.

As soon as she noticed me, she quickly hid the phone from my sight. "I was just replying to a text."

"Don't lie!"

"Alright, then my answer is 1 in 18."

"Do you expect me to say you're right?!"

Hearing that, Rikka looked up at me. Nononono! That's unfair and bordering on cheating. It was blatantly done right in front of me! You did that almost immediately after I taught you how to do it without a calculator! If I change the numbers, you don't pull a calculator out.

Or can't you solve a math problem without one? That's something you should've learned previously!

"Alright, hand over the gum."

She stuck her hand out.

Seriously... she really expects to get some?

"Ju-just this time!"

As a last resort I handed a piece over to Rikka, who looked delighted to get a piece. She immediately stuck it in her mouth. Looking at how happy she was, I suppose my face too mirrored hers.

Why do I have this feeling like I've lost somehow? Alright, next time you'll get a difficult problem even for me. I guarantee it.

"It tastes weird."

Strange, she had the opposite reaction I thought she'd have. It's not the most refined taste you'll ever have, but this should be your standard tasty gum. I truly believe in the power of this gum.

"Well, if you let it melt in your mouth instead of chewing it, you should get this amazingly great taste. It'll melt in your mouth and soul at the same time."

"Incidentally, Yuuta," I was ignored. While I thought this gum was worth talking about, she thought it was worth ignoring. Oh well.

"What?"

"I have entered into a contract with Yuuta. Therefore it is of high importance that Yuuta and I exchange electronic communication codes."

"Even though it appears you just thought of them, I was finally able to understand your complicated phrases! So this, electronic communication code, isn't that like an e-mail address?"

"It is possible that it would be called that in this world."

I knew it! Being a sympathizer is truly amazing! So "electronic communication codes" is a term from another world? Likely it's from a world like Academy City.

"I don't really have a problem with doing that, but are you sure you know how to do that?" It's not really a wonderful thing if you don't think of that first. Well, I knew about it, but Rikka's face changed immediately to confusion and then perplexion.

"...I expect that electronic equipment will interfere with my powers. Thus, I shall aspire to do whatever I can."

"I see, I see. Yes, yes. Then instruct me on what to do."

I pulled out my cell phone from my pocket. It was a bit smaller than Rikka's, but mine was a slider type. Of course, mine was also black.

"Wait. I shall use my phone abilities now. Cross-communication!"

"Wait, that's a different function of this phone."

"I erred. That was infrared communication."

More difficult words, huh? Or rather, this time it was more English than before... wait, infrared rays?"

"Yes."

“Well... it’s right...”

I used this function quite a bit while I was in middle school, but I hadn’t used it once since I went to the entrance ceremony in high school. Could I have already forgotten which button I need to press? But it should be easy to transmit information from one phone to another. Looks like the whole concept of exchanging information disappeared on me.

“Oh, this is how you do it. Let’s go!”

“Waiting for reception.”

Finally, the screen I needed popped up and I sent my phone information¹ to her. This should send everything you need. Got it?

“It’s arrived!”

“Looks like that worked out. It’s still amazing to consider, isn’t it?” I was impressed for the countless time about phone technology. It’s really astounding what they’ve done. You can send information without seeing anything and suddenly it’s there. I think she’s got everything she needs.

Rikka had a delightful smile on her face as she pressed buttons. Then, all of a sudden her fingers stopped and she looked at me. I could swear her eyes were shining as she looked to me. It was a gaze of envy.

“I wish to have a code like Yuuta’s.”

“Huh?!”

I froze in place. A code like mine.... A scary feeling passed through me. Nah, don’t think like that man. Regaining my composure, I thawed out.

¹ On Japanese phones, there is a way to send information such as phone numbers and e-mail addresses to other phone numbers. Yuuta is sending his information to Rikka in this chapter.

“Hmm, what do you mean?”

“Yuuta’s electronic communication code is so cool. divine-exseed-freya-magna@siftbank.ne.jp,.”

“AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH! It’s still that!!!!!!!!!!”

That embarrassing e-mail address I had made before makes me want to die on the spot. That’s right, I made that address in middle school, but I haven’t had a chance to take a look at it since then. I sent it off without thinking about it. I completely screwed up, didn’t I?

Another whiff of my dark history was in the air between us. It led to her wanting to have “another amazing one.”

“Mine is just ordinary. rikka0612@siftbank.ne.jp. I forgot about it... Thus, change is required!”

She sounds so disappointed at having an ordinary e-mail address. Well, of course she would be upset that it was ordinary. You’ll go through a bad experience later. You’ll forget and then be embarrassed about it. Take it from me.

“Don’t you think an ordinary one would be easier to memorize?”

“Ordinary is no good. I want one like Yuuta’s.” She’s definitely assertive about that.

While she’s happy now, I don’t want her to think back on this and regret it. I’d prefer if she wouldn’t feel this agony I’ve felt lately. But she continued on. “Yuuta will pick out my code.”

“That’s a tall task! I’m not sure I could pick out something appropriate...” This horrible address was something I just cobbled together from random English phrases when I was in middle school. I can’t come up with something just like that.

“Not allowed. It must be like Yuuta’s.”

“Do you want to kill me?!” I can’t mass produce my horrible past! A similar address would reek of it!

“There was a development of errors previously.”

“You’ve already tried to change it?”

“A different option should be successful. It is inevitable.”

“For starters, keeping your name would be a good thing...”

I have a hunch her household percentages and friend percentages will immensely be altered if it could be changed. But it looks like she can’t change her address after all. Well, if Rikka can’t change hers, then I guess I can’t rid myself of my demons.

“Well, if I could change mine, then you could probably use the one I have now...”

“Yuuta is forbidden from altering his electronic communication code.”

“Allow it! Let me change it!”

“It’s already cool!”

This is fatality by enchantment or rather, death by cuteness. The power of praise compels me. With how determined she looks as well as how resolute her words are, I have to accept her commands. I can’t tell if these are tears of joy or sadness.

“Damn it! Thank you!” My words of gratitude rang hollow in the empty classroom.

“Now Yuuta, design an electronic communication code.”

“....Curse you. I’ve got no choice, do I?”

And suddenly her determined look turned into a smile.

...Looking at that killer smile, anyone's mood would improve. "I'm not sure if I could come up with one quickly..."

"Yuuta, I want you to put in some dark characters!"

"Ah, dark huh? Well, if you want dark, how about "black *raison d'être*"? It means a dark reason for existing. I also substituted an apostrophe instead of a hyphen..."

I couldn't help blushing as I said that. I'm not really sure of the meaning, but it should be dark reason for existing. If she thinks it's cool, I'll have to memorize it. I'm not that great at English, but then again, this isn't really English.

"C-cool! Super cool!"

And I get super praise. She's happy...not upset!

"Now as soon as we alter the code, it will be complete!"

"Yeah. I'm happy you're pleased with it..."

"Changing code immediately." Rikka began pushing buttons on her phone again. At the same time, my retrone began to make a sound.

"With my power, this world is mine! HAAAAHA"

It was a voice I heard before. Wait, that was my voice. My ringtone.

"Umm... this is...what's wrong....?"

"Yuuta."

"I know! I know what you're going to say! 'Ah, that voice sounds like me. I was a bit surprised! Where did you get that?'"

"On the day of the entrance ceremony. On the rooftop."

“Were you spying on me?!” That was a surprising fact. I don’t remember hearing any kind of camera. Again, the chances of me dying of embarrassment rose.

“I request permission to eliminate it.... It’s too dangerous. Let me erase it...”

“Denied. It’s valuable.”

“Valuable? Then at least let me alter it. I can pick a phrase or song you like...”

“Allowed. I like Sound Horizon. Use one of their songs.”

“Ah, I like them too. Let me find a lyric I think is cool.... NO! Now, let me change it!”

“But Yuuta’s is the best in the world! You’re a parallel existence to me, thus you can’t change it.”

That’s a very complementary answer. If she goes that far to admit it, then I get the feeling I shouldn’t change it.

“At least... at least let me change what I’m saying!”

“Then use ‘Hehe... I am the devil king Yuuta. From here on, feel the power of the abyss!’”

“That’s just as bad for me. At least let me use silent mode!” It was impossible for me to get the upper hand in this conversation. She was just one step ahead of me. I guess the power of the abyss isn’t too far off from what I already have.

“The principle behind silent mode is manners. You were already using normal volume.”

"I don't know why I can't use silent mode, but let me prevent others from hearing that ringtone. Well, besides that, I haven't gotten a text from you. Is everything alright?"

"Text disaster." She said that short reply in somewhat of a lonely tone.

Actually, I felt that way somewhat. But I don't want to become sadder.

"Registration confirmed. New address completed! Thank you Yuuta."

"I'd say the new portion gives me an uncomfortable feeling. Well, um... that was fast. Alright, send me your info now."

"Wait a second. I want to experiment. Let us see how far these infrared rays will go. It will be of use later."

After suddenly saying that, Rikka immediately got up and went to the corner of the classroom.

"You too Yuuta. Move in the opposite direction."

"Ah, alright." I moved to where the cleaning utensils were kept, just as she instructed, and reluctantly stood. Rikka picked up her cell phone and pointed it diagonally towards me. I don't really get why we have to be in these locations. Since she was standing in the doorway, it's probably the biggest distance possible.

"Then next is my turn to send it."

"Okay."

Ah! It finally came. Up until now we were close together, but I didn't know how far infrared rays could extend. I was perfectly able to see her information on my screen.

“It was successful, correct? Huh? Trouble Yuuta! The demon world is summoning me! I must go!”

After saying that, Rikka rushed out of the classroom at lightning speed.

“Hey, wait, WAIT!” By the time I could reach the doorway, I couldn’t see her figure.

I see now. I completely fell for a trap. A rather clever one. Put each of us in the best position for you to escape and head out. I overlooked it. She really didn’t want to study even after we were bound, huh? Well, that is that and this is this. My willingness to study just went up. She’s definitely going to be instructed how to study by me. The blood of a teacher papa flowed in me.

But she left without signs of returning for now. Seriously, where could she go?

“We just exchanged numbers, didn’t we? I’ll just give her a call and... let’s see if she’ll come back...”

Gotta give it a try. I slide open my phone and looked through the “ta”s in my address book. Let’s see, Takanashi... is nowhere to be found. Didn’t I register Rikka Takanashi in my contacts not too long ago?

“Why are you not in here?!” Unintentionally I retorted back to my cell phone. I’m certainly glad no one else was there or else I’d be super embarrassed. They’d think I’d talk back to my phone all the time.

Alright, let’s look in the “ta” section again. Not there. Maybe it was changed when we were trying to change the address. I looked throughout the phone as best as I could, but I couldn’t find it. If it’s not in there, I can’t call her.

Unfortunately, it was not registered in my book. Just a little while ago I put all the guys in the class in there. Maybe I could find something “Rikka-ish” in there.

In the “other” category, she was registered as † User of the Devilish Truth Stare, Rikka Takanashi † .

Definitely a chuunibyou. Well, now that I have her name, I can give her a call.

Three rings later and she picked up.

“It is I.”

You answered quickly.

“Hey, where are you? Get back here!”

“I will be in the demon world shortly...”

“Then, tomorrow you’ll have to do twice the amount of problems we were supposed to do today.”

“Ah, oh.”

I heard the classroom door open. Of course, it sounded because Rikka opened it. ...The demon world is rather close.

Ah... I couldn’t help but give a big sigh at this. I’ll need all the patience I can get while teaching her to study. Ten days until the re-test. Our short after school study time has begun.

“Yuuta! It’s another me!”

This isn’t going to be easy...

Chapter 4 : Shinka Nibutani

The next day we held our after school study time like we had done the day before. It was only our second day, but I was already planning to hold one every day until her re-test. If you ask, I'm feeling pretty confident she'll be ready to take it then.

Since we had already covered the absolute basics the previous day, Rikka was able to recite various formulas and such from memory. Excuse me for saying this; if she wasn't able to do that, then there was no way for her to do well in a test. So we quickly put her memory to good use. After all, we didn't have the luxury of having many of these lessons prior to her test.

Last night, I was thinking about Rikka and made a set of questions for her to solve today in order for her to review the material. "Alright, let's see if you can solve my problems today!"

"Leave it to me." She quickly began solving problems. Quite a shift from how she was yesterday.

While I was thinking about how her motivation had changed, I saw that she wasn't writing down any formulas. Come on now, you gotta solve these step-by-step.

"Um... you know you can use this formula here...."

"Oh! You're a genius Yuuta."

"Sorry, but I don't think so."

"Then you're a sugar beet.²"

² Rikka uses the term "天才" to refer to Yuuta as a genius in line 1. She then uses the same phrasing (tensai) to call him a sugar beet.

“Sorry, but again I don’t think so. Those are served in Hokkaido. Don’t mix them up with me.”

You know, when we’re talking like that, she seems just like a normal girl. Granted, she’s probably a bit weird and somewhat of a fool, but I’ve had fun talking with her over the past two days. Maybe it would’ve been nice to get to know her sooner.

Of course, as soon as I say that, she has to pull out some half-hearted made-up thing.

“Incidentally, Yuuta, you have yet to give me a detailed report on the Devilish Truth Stare.”

“Huh? Report? Explaining it?”

“That would be fine. One that details the contracting abilities of this Devilish Truth Stare should be sufficient. You are the only one who has seen that power. However, since using said power, my body has felt completely exhausted. I will still attempt to invoke one ability though. This ability will increase my knowledge points, giving that stat a higher level.”

Another long made-up story, huh? Yesterday, while we were going over the basics, she had to recite another one in order to get serious about studying. I don’t really mind it, but they’re a bit childish. Would it be too difficult to not say them before going to work ? I don’t think you’ve got to be like an organic lifeform.. Oh well, she’s kind of cute when she’s acting like that. The old me would think so as well. In fact, he’d be deeply moved.

“Alright, let’s try it!”

As I said that, I didn’t know that I was falling into her trap. As soon as Rikka said “Oh,” she began removing her eyepatch and revealing her eye.

“Permission acquired to activate ability. Initiate secondary mode: Intelligence Device On.”

As soon as she finished speaking her golden eye awakened. Ignoring that, she had to use another complicated phase, didn't she? I remember hearing that word somewhere. Oh yeah, she used some English phrases yesterday. Guess that would be her English power. I want to hear her go on and on for a while.

“Initiated. Connected to server. Connection is stable. The Devilish Truth Stare will respond to our questions. The chains that bound the numerical formulas have been released. There will no restrictions on the power we authorize here. Contractor's name: ‘Yuuta.’ Rely on his resolution to die. Completed. –Devilish Truth Stare Squadron”

My breathing increased as this long spiel went on. This time Rikka was incredibly lively. I was having fun watching her recite this somewhat-magical incantation. It was the second time I had this much fun with her. Though, me die? I'm not sure about me dying... That part really spoiled my fun.

“So are you finished?”

“My numerical abilities have rapidly risen. The intelligence stat has exponentially expanded. However... my body has become weakened.”

“Huh?”

As Rikka finished saying her sentence, she fell limp onto the desk. Lazy bum! If you're going to use that much energy, use it for studying! Damn it, I didn't see this coming. I was having too much fun watching her communication with the chuuni world that I ignored this happening. Counting yesterday's spiel, this makes twice she's pulled a stunt.

“Oi! Let's go!”

“Yuuta...you must finish what I started...”

“This is your studying!”

“Promise me you’ll continue when I pass on...” Rikka then passed away...Not really. Hmm, let’s just call this “self-restoration mode” and take a break.

Thinking about what she said, does she really want to kill me? I can’t think of anything I’ve done that would make her want to curse me.

“Hey... Oh well, we have had some hot weather lately, huh?”

During our break I was using a desk mat as a fan to cool myself off. Looking outside, I could see the baseball team eagerly practicing and yelling in that heat. While I was looking at them, I set my eye on one girl. Though she’s a bit small, she was eagerly giving out water and taking down notes for the team. Was she a manager for the team? Suddenly I was reminded of that rumor about the masked girl.

“Hey Rikka, did you hear about a masked girl?”

“Masked girl?”

Rikka raised her head from her desk and gave a puzzled look to me. Hmm? It wasn’t you?

“Well, this is just a rumor. You know, like that one about how this world is really the afterlife. Someone dressed like that talked back to a teacher at some time. Had you not heard about it?”

“This is the first I’ve heard of such a thing. So this world is the afterlife? How could that be?”

Of course her interest would move to a different topic. I don’t know how it got there, but going on about that muddled our conversation. But this means...

it wasn't Rikka.... Nonono, don't think about it. We don't have time to think about it.

"Alright, let's get back to studying!"

"My body is still in recovery mode."

"....." My training papa blood ached. Time to use the last resort!

"You won't get any gum..." Now would she be eager to work?

Upon hearing that one word, her limp body suddenly rose up. Looks like this artificial sweetener had an immediate effect for her motivation. She seems to like this kind of candy.

After that, she worked hard to solve problems one-by-one. For each one she got right, I would hand over another piece until my 30-odd pieces were all snatched away. Oh well, it's a small price to pay for happiness.

We had gone until the final bell of the day, so it was getting pretty late. Our houses were in the opposite directions from the school. That means we couldn't walk home together unfortunately. Knowing Rikka, she'd probably continue talking about things she made up, but I think I'd have fun walking home with her. Maybe it'll happen one day.

Yesterday she simply said "Later" before leaving the classroom. But today was different.

"Alright, see you tomorrow."

"Oh, see you tomorrow!" Were we starting to get along? I had a really good feeling about this. Looks like I better stock up on some gum for tomorrow.



As Rikka had already left before me, I was in no rush to head out. It was already past the final bell to leave, and I was the only one left in any classroom since the others were already locked.

.....This dim building is really scary. There's no "school"ish atmosphere when you can barely see around you. It's like one of those ghost stories I saw when I was younger. Memories of those scary videos were in my head as I went downstairs to the shoe lockers, changed my shoes, and left the building.

Heading home by myself brought a surprisingly lonely feeling. Usually I head home with Isshiki, but it's just been me for two days straight. This lonesome feeling reminded me of how I used to return home by myself during middle school. While these strange thoughts went around my head, I reached the school gate.

"Oh, Togashi-kun, why are you here so late? Did you join a club?"

That somewhat scattered voice belonged to my rougher-than-usual class rep, Nibutani, who was wearing a t-shirt and track pants. It looked like she might be waiting for someone as she played with her bangs and cell phone.

I said with a little bit of wavering, "Not really. I haven't joined a club..." I shouldn't say anything about spending study time with Rikka. Not that I have a guilty conscience; I just don't want to have to hear a "Why are you doing that?" reply from her.

So... let's change the subject! "What are you doing here Nibutani? Have your club activities ended?"

"Yeah, the dance club just parted."

"Dance club, huh? It's a bit of a surprise that you joined them. With how tall you are, I would have thought you'd be on the basketball team."

“Everyone says that.... Well, I was on my school’s team during middle school. Hey, did you know how good our school’s dance club was?”

After saying that, Nibutani did a splendid revolution and ended in a cool pose. Oh, oh! It was such a pretty turn that I couldn’t help but clap. But our dance club is pretty good huh? Maybe I should ask her about it.

“How good would you say the club is? Do you go to competitions?”

“Ah, I thought you’d say something like that. You haven’t seen a dance tournament? I suppose saying it’s something like one of the figure skating tournaments would do.”

Oh, where judges award points based on execution. I get it.

“I see now. So you joined because our dance club has won so many tournaments.”

“You got it. That and our club activities are pretty fun too. Dancing is so much fun! Now, since I showed you my moves, you got to show me yours. Go on!”

“You want to see my bad skills?!”

There’s no way I could do anything like dancing while she’s got that sadistic smile. What kind of dance does she expect me to pull off? I’m not sure I could do anything besides the kitakita dance.³

“Then would spinning around once be a reasonable request?”

“Not happening!”

Upon hearing my denial, Nibutani began cackling. She’s certainly enjoying her free time. It’s so irritating.

³ A dance popularized by the show *Mahoujin Guru Guru* by Kita Kita Oyaji. ([Niconico link](#))

"But it's rare to see you leaving the school at this time. What's going on?"

Damn it, we've come back to that. Please don't let me regret what I'm about to say.

"I was studying in the library."

"Oh, you're a very studious person? That's a bit surprising. Oh yeah, what did you get on that math test?"

Of cour... I completely forgot about our conversation yesterday... I told her I was worried about my grade on the test before we got them back...With a reluctant smile I forced a reply.

"Well, I got an 85 by luck."

It's only a little drop from what I actually got, but that lie was still enough to give me a guilty conscious.

I sullenly replied, "Look, it just kinda happened like that." I couldn't tell her the truth after all.

"Seriously? Thrice my score?"

Thrice... let's see, that'd be around a 30. Definitely failing... And what happened to my delusion she was a smart class rep?! Is this alright?!

I began to wonder if it's alright for our class to have this failure as a rep. Well, one failing grade doesn't mean she's horrible at every subject. She is very popular too. I began to reassume my support of Nibutani as the class rep.

What should I say in this situation? Would something consoling be alright?

"...I'm sure everyone has a subject they're bad at. Don't let it get you down, okay?"

“What? Aren’t you going to help me study too?”

Huh? What was that? ‘Help me study too?’

“Well, you’re helping Takanashi-san study right? So won’t you help me too?”

Her whole face went into a huge smile.

“.....” I was silent. Does this mean...she knew what was happening from the beginning? That’s right, Rikka passed by here earlier since she left before I did. But why would Nibutani attack like that against me? Is she a total sadist?

“Can I....? Well, I’ve already got my hands full with Rikka.”

“Oh? You’re on a first name basis with Takanashi-san?”

“!?”

Crap! Rikka’s brainwashing took hold and I called her by her first name. In just one word I made a huge mistake. How can I fix this?!

“What kind of relationship do you guys have?”

Wow, straight to the point... She saw a wounded animal and went for the kill. That sadistic smile is still staring back at me. I’ve got a hunch at what to do next. I won’t let her get one over on me. I feel like a rat looking into her snake-like eyes. That’s the kind of atmosphere that I can sense right now. With how much time has gone by, I have to go into full self-defense mode. All systems... let’s run away.

“We... well, that’s not a problem. Look, don’t you call your friends by their first names?”

“Aren’t we friends?”

This time she's definitely eyeing me. Wait, are we friends.... We've talked a lot in the past couple of days, does that make us friends? If you talk once, you might be friends. If you talk everyday, you're siblings.

"Well, we are friends but... calling you 'Nibutani' just feels so right. That's just an impression I have. You give off that 'Nibutani' feeling to me."

"Oh, is that so? Well, I guess that's alright. So, you call people different things?" Though she stopped glaring at me, she replied with some harsh words.

But that's not the end. I've not gotten out of this hole. The intimidation she used changed and I could only docily reply.

"Umm... Look, remember when I took Rikka to the nurse's office? At that time,"

"At that time? At that time, she confessed her love to you?"

"No, NO! At that time, her grade was so horrible! I was so traumatized that I had to offer to help her by studying together!"

I was a bit overwhelmed and ended up shouting part of that. Then I noticed how embarrassed I felt and became even more embarrassed. It was a downward spiral from there.

"So, why can't you tutor me as well?"

"Why would I do that?!"

"Well, isn't my grade just as bad? If you could teach her, then you could teach me. I only got a 28."

I knew it... Well, I feel a bit guilty now. I'd be lying if I say that I would mind tutoring Nibutani. She's got a point, but there's no way that I'd be able to take care of two people at the same time.... Besides, asking me to tutor her at the same time as Rikka, that's definitely impossible.

Somehow while I was thinking, a miracle struck.

“Ah, well, how about I refer you to someone. He’s a good guy who could help you study.”

“...Who?”

“Isshiki.” He’s a pretty respectable guy. This time he did just about as well as I did, but who knows how much he’ll study and how well he’ll do on the next test. Besides, he’s just as determined as his name says. He’d at least lecture you on the principles of punctuality. As for if he’d teach how I would, I couldn’t say.

But there is one problem. I’m not sure if he could turn off that “I love all girls” aura he has. Excluding that, I can’t say anything else bad about him. He’s perfect for this.

“Isshiki’s not good enough.”

Immediate rejection. Poor guy. My heart goes out to you man. Well, let’s see if I can’t get some advice for you when I speak with you next.

“Why not? Won’t you be able to study with him? He’d probably tutor as well as I could.”

“He’s a bit of a pervert.”

He was found out. Or else it looks like the girls knew about his real personality from the start. Guess the point of view between guys and girls is quite different. Granted, I can’t tell him to have changed now.

“Well, that’s true, but there’s not another person I could refer you to...”

“No need to refer me, I’m sure you’ll do a great job. So... I’m ready to study under your supervision.”

Huh? My supervision? There's no way I could assume that position over her. Well, maybe if it's only studying.

"No, I'm not sure I could put you under me...."

"... But I need someone to look up to. Takanashi-san does too. You're perfect for us. So why don't I join your two person study group? ...I won't be a bother. I can just watch and not answer questions."

"You say you won't be a bother!?"

I didn't see either her statement or this whole scheme she's worked on coming towards me. I'm sure I must look very puzzled at how this has played out. Definitely.

"Well, about that... Sorry, but I've got my hands full with Rikka. You'll have to rely on someone else. I'm really sorry."

"Hmm? Well, then let's talk about something unrelated Togashi-kun. Do you know what's underneath Takanashi-san's eyepatch? Or how about her bandages?"

With the sudden change in topics, I'm sure I must have moved from puzzled to curious.

Hmm, the eyepatch? Well, I know what's under it, but I don't know why she wears those bandages. Well, it's probably because she thinks it's cool, but it bothers me.

"I don't know why you're asking me; I don't know what's under it either."

"That so? Oh well. I thought that you might have seen what was underneath the eyepatch since you went to the nurse's office with her when her eye was hurting. Weren't you curious about it?"

“Oh, the one that was injured?” Actually, I was curious about it earlier too. I’m sure everyone in our class was.

“Yeah, that one. Well, you know, I think it’s possible that she’s showing signs of chuunibyou.”

“Chuu...?” unintentionally came out. Isshiki used that phrase previously, but now Nibutani is also using it... I didn’t think that word had already spread around the world, but maybe this disease is common around the globe.

Seriously, chuunibyou?

“Give you a chuu? That sounds like you’re asking me to kiss you, pervert! PERV!”⁴

“Sorry! I said something weird without thinking about what I was saying! How do you know about chuunibyou? I never thought I’d hear you say that term.”

“Haven’t you ever thought about putting all those patients into a mental facility?”

“Nope!” I don’t want to live in that kind of world. I’m sure I would’ve been put in there when I was in middle school.

“There’s nothing good about those idiots. Upon reflection, I realized that there was no way to cure people like her. Though I joke about putting them in an institution, I don’t think there’s any way for us to cure this horrible illness.”

Nibutani had a serious expression on her face and some crazy words coming out of her mouth. While I was immensely curious about why she would think things like that, I had to sigh.

“Well, keep talking...” And our conversation kept going

⁴ Chuu is kiss. Without keeping it as it is in Japanese, I would have lost the joke.

“While I wanted to talk with Takanashi-san, it looks like you’re the only one she’s talked to.”

“I’m the only one she’s spoken to...?”

“I believe you’re the only one, but I don’t know why you. She’s clearly a chuunibyou patient; just look at how she’s isolated herself. I tried to talk with her the other day, but I didn’t get a reply. I got concerned about her.”

...She knows a lot about Rikka. But why wouldn’t she talk to someone is the important issue here.

“Oh well. It looks like things will stay the same regarding Takanashi-san. There’s nothing else I can say or do.”

“True. She might be wearing that eyepatch because it’s actually injured. Don’t worry about it.”

“... That may be true. But since she’s always wearing it, I can’t help but be curious.”

“Yeah, that’s something that would be something difficult to ask about. Oh well, it doesn’t really matter.”

Gave her the slip! If I told her what was under that eyepatch, there’d be a big uproar.

Since I was able to be cured more-or-less, I’ve got a different idea about the disease than Nibutani does. As for how I was cured, well, I think everyone will be cured eventually. I don’t think you could force someone to be cured from chuunibyou. I don’t know how I would’ve reacted to someone forcing me to do something about it.

As for Nibutani beside me, I think I’d have to raise her classification to be a dangerous entity. I’ll have to keep my eye on her.

While I was preparing to keep an tab on her,

“Shinka, were you waiting a while for me~? Oh, who’s this?”

“Seriously, who is that?”

Two voices came out of the school building targeted towards Nibutani. They’re her friends and my classmates. Since they were wearing a similar t-shirt and track pant outfit like her, it looks like they just finished their club activities too.

Wait a minute. “Who?!” You see me in class everyday! How do you not know my name by now? Is my presence that hidden? I began to worry about my existence.

Incidentally, this is Sasa and Miyoshi. The short one with the sentimental voice is Sasa. The one whose height is in the middle and gives off a gaudy impression is Miyoshi. I get the feeling I don’t belong with these three. Looks like it’s girls time with Nibutani.

“Huh? This is Togashi-kun. You don’t know him? Oh well, it’s all good. See you tomorrow Togashi-kun!”

“Eh~ who?~” Haven’t I seen him around before~?”

“No, this is the first time I’ve seen him. Is he an upperclassman?”

And that’s about all I heard of the conversation before the trio was out of my sights. I’m sure that I’d be depressed if I heard any more of their conversation. Wait, that’s not alright. Even though I don’t stand out, you at least should know who I am. I really miss my middle school days. Those were troubled times, but now’s not any different.... Just gonna cry a bit.



I took a little detour and stopped into a convenience store so I wouldn't run into the girls on my way home. I bought a lot of gum and headed to my house.

Chapter 5 : ChuuniStory and ChuuniBattle

“Oi Togashi! I got something you’ll want to see! It’s the popularity rankings!”

It was the morning of the third after school study session with Rikka. I was on my way to school by myself when I heard Isshi’s bike ring from behind me. We usually don’t head to school together, but today happened to be one of those days. Usually, I walk everyday while he occasionally takes his bike, likely when he has to head to his after-school job via pedal power. Looks like work is on his schedule today.

He hopped down to straddle his bike and walk beside me.

“What?! It’s already completed?! Let me see it right now!”

“Hehehe, wait a sec, wait just a second. I’ll let you see it soon. It turned out superb! This contest’s cutest girl was quite the surprise. A surprise I say! Oh who topped the ranking? Was it her? Was it her? But you know something, from how I see it, our class has more cute girls than the average high school class. Wouldn’t you say so? That thought came to me when I finished these rankings and I was shocked at what happened. It was like I didn’t have any information on these cute girls at all. Oh I had to revise my notes in my pad quite a few times. There was quite a lot of new information from everyone this time. Hehe, still want to hear? Hey, you want in bud?”

Sorry everyone. Isshi’s reached full pervert mode and we’re not even at school. I know the guy loves girls as much as any guy, but he’s sounding dangerous today. On the other hand, I am a guy.

“Let me see! Or tell me what happened at least!”

“Listen up! We’ll start with the rankings and then the new information will come after!”

As he said his hot-blooded retort, he pulled out a piece of paper that had “114! SUPERB! The girls whose cuteness transcend that of angels ranking!” in somewhat sloppy handwriting. I was so engrossed in these rankings that I forgot to give a rebuttal. Again, I am a guy. This took priority. What can I say?

Let’s see, who topped the rankings?

“First place is... yep, Nibutani. That’s why she’s my recommended girl. Just going by looks, I’d have gone with Kannagi-san, so this was quite the surprise for me.”

Thinking back to yesterday, I happened to be with his recommended girl. I think he’d be really surprised if I told him just why I couldn’t recommend her. She started off like a sadist and ended up as the enemy of all chuunibyou patients.

“Are you sure you’re that surprised?”

Isshiki kept up the fever he started moments ago.

“Well, even though I recommended her, this was really a surprise. It was probably her leadership qualities that pushed her to the top. They’re her biggest strengths. Kannagi-san may be the cutest, but beauty doesn’t stop at your skin! I think we all can say that she’s cute, but it takes more than a pretty face to be beautiful! In today’s society, we men are shy! You can categorize us as beta all you want! We’re that easy to understand! Thus it’s natural to see why someone like Nibutani-san would be seen as cute! It’s not all talk too! Just look at how she acts so carefree when she’s talking down to us. That beauty transcends time itself! It’s that sweet existence that men today truly want!”

Though he sounded hot-blooded at the start, that second half was quite cold. What the hell was he talking about? He kept going on and on and I forgot to retort even once. Have I lost my touch? This is the first time I’ve heard someone be glad to be classified as beta.

"I understand. Well, I agree that she gives off a pleasant atmosphere. Both the boys and girls in our class would say you could rely on her."

That was the only good thing I could think to say about her.

"Huh? Are you disappointed with the results?"

"No, it's not that I'm disappointed...It's that I'm not sure I would classify Nibutani like that."

"Ah, you don't think she's that easy to read huh?"

"Something like that." As I started to talk, I began to lengthen my stride to try and run away. I've had my fill of this topic. I don't understand Nibutani. I really don't.

Isshiki began to pedal to match my lengthened strides. I could see his smirking face beside me. He probably has some profound thing to comment on.

"Oh, is it something else? Were you disappointed that you were the only one to put in a vote for Takanashi-san?"

"What?! No, that's not it. Yeah, that's definitely not it at all."

I'm sure he wouldn't believe me for a second by how that came out. I mean, I'm a little disappointed I was the only person to vote for her, but it's not enough for me to be depressed over. I suppose someone would have to become friends with her to think she's cute.

But then I'd start to get jealous of that person. Hey, I thought she was cute first! Maybe that kind of situation would pop up. I certainly wouldn't have the peace of mind I had when I first voted for Rikka.

These feelings of happiness and loneliness began to get to me. As I started to become closer to her, these feelings began to change due to this

idiotic chuunibyou girl. When I voted for her, her cute looks were the only feelings I could claim I felt towards her.

“Oh well, it’s alright. Takanashi-san will belong only to Togashi! No one else will have a chance! You’ve already climbed up several steps on the path to love. Oh yeah, aren’t you two studying after school today too?”

“What? What did you say I was doing?”

“Dude, it’s already spread throughout the class. Texts are being sent all around us as we speak. I heard something about a study group, but I don’t know; I didn’t hear everything! But for some reason, it seems like Takanashi-san and Togashi were flirting while studying. Everyone in class probably knows about you two by now.”

“Who would send such a text?! I’ll take them out. And we weren’t flirting! Misunderstandings like that just add to my troubles!”

“Well, that’s what it said. Oh, well I do have some good news concerning her. Wanna hear?”

Good news? Considering how the rumor about her chuunibyou came true, I’m not sure if good news could describe it. With how today’s gone so far, that’s all I can predict with anything related between us three. Sigh, what’s this about?

“Well, not that I’m particularly interested, but go ahead and tell me if you want.” I want to hear what he has to say, but I had to act like I didn’t want to hear anything. Sorry to act a bit like a tsundere.

“Actually, it’s about that masked girl rumor I told you the other day! Looks like it’s not Takanashi-san at all. Seems like someone from the anime research society was frolicking around in a mask and went into the teacher’s lounge. They said some embarrassing lines from a game or something. This info

looks to be pretty trustworthy man. That's also another text that's going around. Maybe that rumor about her being chuunibyou will stop since she's not the masked girl. Looking good for you man!"

"....." I happen to know very well that she's is a chuunibyou patient. What could I say? If I have to say something, then I'm glad Rikka wasn't the masked girl. It's reassuring to know that she wasn't responsible for something. I get the impression that masked person stunt was some sort of prank. I'm pretty sure the anime research society would have more interest in doing something like that than her.

"Well, that's that. Good luck in your after school flirting time. I'm jealous...oh am I jealous!"

"Ah, she's actually bad at math. I'm just helping her do her best..."

Isshiki continued his hot-blooded talk about the rankings as we went on the path to school. As he went on and on about each girl's points, I could only reply in half-hearted comments. My head was already full with the chaos revolving around Rikka and Nibutani. Oh, speaking of Nibutani...

"Isshiki, it's not good for you to give off that perverted impression."

"Huh?" Seems it was news to him. I couldn't continue what I was going to say because he looked so pitiful. It's best to notice these things yourself from time to time.

"Oi! What the hell was that about?! Why did you say that to me!?"

Forgetting all about his rankings, he began frantically asking about that instead. I headed onto school after glancing at him.



As soon as no one was in the classroom after the end of day bell rung, we peacefully began day 3 of our afternoon study sessions. Of course, Rikka was sitting at my desk as we were the only ones there.

As we spent the past couple of days studying together, I found myself better understanding Rikka as a person. To start, she utterly hates math. Well, hate is putting it lightly; it's more like she wishes it was alive so it could die an agonizing death. And, of course, getting a 0 only made that hate grow stronger. I took the opportunity to watch Rikka during math class. While she would nod her head and properly listen to the lecture, it looks like she wasn't able to grasp the concepts afterwards.

She was so stubborn that she wouldn't go near the variables A and I when they were on her sheet. "Factorization itself has no point existing in this world!" Of course saying that wouldn't help you use the technique. I can't say I wasn't uneasy when it came time for her tutoring in factoring. She probably wasn't good at variables to begin with.

So I started working on getting her used to seeing A , and then I . If I didn't include factorization in our studying, there'd be no chance she'd pass the re-test. We only had a few days left and I began pondering what to do as she laid on my desk.

Since she hates math so much, I couldn't see her trying to study and do well during extra lessons in the middle of summer. I'm confident that she wouldn't be able to do well in summer lessons.

She had taken out a pencil for writing. For some reason I walked over and looked outside the open window. I could swear I saw a smile, but that might just be my imagination.

.....It looked like an elf to me.

While I was thinking about stupid things like that, a summer breeze came in and spread around the classroom. It began to blow Rikka's short hair. "You know Yuuta, I'm able to control wind like this."

"How the hell do you start a conversation like that?!"

You know, I remember being able to control the wind as well with my dark flame powers. I was under the impression that I could blow and the wind would start to blow as well. Seriously, is being able to control the wind something like a mandatory chuunibyou power?

Wind powers are frightening.

"It's too hot. I demand air conditioning."

"Well, I'd like it too... Wait, if you can control the wind, can't you make it cold in here...?"

"....."

Without saying a word, Rikka turned on the ceiling fan above us by flipping the switch beside the blackboard. As soon as she flipped it, the two blades began turning around and blowing air. Can't say it's that cold though.

After confirming it was on, Rikka looked at me triumphantly. I have to admit, she does have quite the range of expressions. Waitwaitwait. Yes you look proud of yourself, but you can't simply turn a switch and say you're manipulating the wind! While I feel a bit hesitant inside, I'm not sure how to reply in this situation.

"This is the limit of my cold powers. Originally I had none. Only higher level users can use colder techniques. I changed to have powers of darkness. Due to that, I have only reached a lower level thus far. Manipulating the fan is the extent of what I can do."

“...That’s a bit cool, isn’t it....”

I like that kind of backstory. Godly powers, black magic tools, and such. Oh yeah they’re cool.

While I was thinking about those stupid things, Rikka moved back to her usual studying position and sat down. Was she really willing to study today?

“It’s hot.” And then she laid down on the desk.

It’s at least five times warmer than yesterday. It’s just a normal hot summer day. Ask anyone and they’d say that it’s hot.

“That it is. Unfortunately, our fan doesn’t make it much cooler. Well, we don’t have the ability to install an air conditioner.”

At one time, all classrooms were to have air conditioning. They were to only be used during class. But then the teachers complained and so they were forbidden from being used during classes. Then we students were to be forbidden from using them at all. Some type of regulations or such. Of course, this is all hear-say anyways.

So her godly powers were sealed huh?

Maybe the heat was getting to me today. I was starting to get affected by Rikka’s evilness and felt a bit chuunibyouish. I was succumbing to some awful embarrassing feelings.

“I grant Yuuta the right to install an air conditioner.”

“So I get the punishment while you enjoy yourself?!”

“That is a rash statement. My Devilish Truth Squadron Stare informed me that you have the ability to control cool feelings.”

“... Isn’t that different from your Devilish Truth Stare Squadron that you said yesterday?”

I saw Rikka’s face change from her usual expression to one of puzzlement. Looks like she flubbed the creation of it. She tried to summon all the calmness she had and replied,

“True. I detailed the ability of the Truth Stare Squadron’s ability for memory storage previously. The similar group, the Devilish Truth Squadron, uses the power of darkness to accumulate information together. It’s quite handy that the Devilish Truth Squadron allows for deallocation.”

She was quite elegant in making it seem like it wasn’t something she just thought of. Great taste in designing back stories, huh? Those powers are quite useful indeed, but if you’re in a hurry, you’re out of luck. Thus I had to make up something myself.

“Well, I used something similar with the flames of darkness.”

Damn it, I was too late. I revealed something from my hidden past. This time it was Rikka who got to see me taken aback. She began looking at me with great interest.

“Flames of darkness? Yuuta is the devil king who...controls the flames of darkness? My...rival?!”

“I’m not the devil king! I’m probably your only ally in the world! How does that make me a rival! That was in the past... I’m just an ordinary high school student now.”

But of course Rikka wasn’t going to give up on the story I let slip through. I’m not sure it’ll have a negative influence on our relationship. Still, I can’t keep coming up with new things for her. It’s not good for me. Now I apparently have the power to control cold though I don’t know how.

“You were the devil king in the past?” She’s such a persistent person. Granted, is it a bad thing that she’s elevating me to the status of devil king? In that case, why not show her that?

Let’s do that. I’ll introduce myself in my old chuunibyou manner and we’ll have a delusion battle. I’ll come up with a script, say my lines, and battle against a fictional rival. It’ll be fun. While you can maintain your powers by yourself, it’s fun to let them out against someone now and then.

The old me was alone and somewhat missed. I have a hunch the me from the Golden Age is ready day-or-night.

The question of whether this was good or bad for me crossed my mind for a moment. Until a moment ago, it was tough to believe I was actually a chuunibyou patient once. But, just for a moment, wouldn’t it be fun to battle with her?

Yeah, it’d be fun. Even though I’ve moved on, one round wouldn’t hurt. Granted, my talents have become half-rusted. Well, more like fully rusted.

The heat must be getting to me. There’s usually no way I’d do this. It must be due to the sun. Yeah, that’s why I’m saying these things.

So for a moment, I let the old me regain control over my body.

“Yes! You’re such a blockhead! I’ll use my cold powers indeed! FREEZE! ETERNAL FORCE!”

“Aria isolation! Use of Devilish Truth Stare- Dull contractee’s foolish move. RETURN...END!”

I could see that familiar golden eye shine radiantly again today. This time, her left hand moved into a pose as well. That hand movement must be that “end” power she’s invoking.

.....I suppose you could say she really got into this role-playing. She even halted my aria prior to announcing its termination. Well done Rikka-san!

Well, this little chuunibyou battle put a heavy strain on my soul even before her moves. So with this, she wins.

“Yuuta’s power is inexperienced. There is no ability to control cold inside you. Use of flames of darkness is recommended.”

She re-applied her eyepatch as she was saying that. You have to admit, her re-applying it right after taking it off was pretty cute.

“Is that so....”

Our made-up story ended suitably. Now I don’t feel the urge to do that again in either body or soul.

“Incidentally, Yuuta, weren’t you the Dark Flame Master?”

“How do you know my old name?!”

I was even more vigilant than usual this time, so it might be her bewildering power. My body was already reaching critical. Unintentionally, I wanted to stretch my arms out Ultraman-style before a battle began.

Nononono. I couldn’t bear the thought that anyone could see me. I wouldn’t even yell that from a rooftop!

“Hmm? It’s common for users of the flames of darkness to name themselves ‘Dark Flame Master.’”

It’s that common, huh? So there must be others like “Darkness Flame Master”? Give me a moment.

“There are no problems with you being named that. The issue at hand is the time of Yuuta’s awakening.”

“That doesn’t mean I’ve awakened....or should I not even say that? I don’t want to say the rest of it.”

“As a contractee, I must know your past. If you please...”

If it’s an obligation, why add “If you please?” It’s a bit contradictory when it sounds like you’re compelling me to do something and then add that on at the end.

I’m still no match for that gleeful look though. I prepared myself to begin my little story about my past. Since I’ve entered high school, no one, not even Isshiki, has heard this story about my second year in middle school.

“...It’s true. I once housed a black flame dragon inside me that gave me power. It was there where I became known as the Dark Flame Master. Since the darkness flame dragon had the ability to destroy the world, it was previously sealed away. I was very childish and re-sealed it inside me.”

And there’s the mostly plagiarized back story. Very little originality in there. I think some manga influenced me by having a dragon inside someone. At the time, I thought dragons were the absolute coolest thing ever created. Well, even now, I still think they’re cool. I really like them.

“Black flame dragon.”

As Rikka muttered that, her eye was sparkling incessantly. Her body was leaning towards me, wanting to hear more and more. Here doggy doggy... or should it be a black cat instead? Yeah, she’s more like a black cat that wants to cuddle with someone.

I was a bit uneasy whether I should continue my story or not. Well, the past is the past. As long as I make that clear, I can move on. So... let’s cut away my past!

“So, it was around my second year in middle school when I sealed the black flame dragon inside me. I wore bandages to keep the seal intact and went after the Dark Organization. That dragon resonated inside me and so I became the Dark Flame Master. Incidentally, my catchphrase during that time was ‘Vanish! Disappear in the Flames of Darkness!’ But of course that too was plagiarized. My god was it plagiarized. It’s okay, you can laugh.”

“Yuuta also had a spectacular past.” I thought Rikka would laugh, but her eye just kept sparkling.

Well, I suppose this is enough about my history. Wait... “Yuuta also”... Does that mean Rikka had something big happen to her in the past?

Out of curiosity I asked, “Rikka, did you also have a spectacular past?” but that sparkling eye of hers grew dim.

“It’s a secret.”

She answered in that voice that felt like it would disappear. And then with a smile,

“Let’s study.” Such a scary demand.

“Ah, Ah. Yes! Let’s do that!”

Looks like we were done with story time. Everyone has one or two things they want to keep secret, so while I was a little interested in hearing what hers were, I didn’t feel the need to delve into it. Sorry. Just as we had begun studying again, we heard the door to the classroom open.

“Oh, lookie here. It’s just like they said.”

The evil presence who intruded on this two person session was none other than our class rep, Nibutani.

She had a smile like a detective who just nailed a criminal to the wall. She had finally found the two of us studying.

Oh crap... maybe she had heard our conversation just a little while ago...

Shouldn't she be in the auditorium with the dance club now? (Information provided by Isshiki) I wanted to ask her why she would come here, but I couldn't think of anything good to break the ice with, so we just glared at each other. Rikka was also looking at Nibutani.

"Are you ignoring me?" Nibutani sounded disappointed. As usual, she donned that sadistic aura of hers. Let's start by saying something inoffensive.

"No, we weren't ignoring you... Wait, why are you here?"

"Yesterday, you said you were studying in the library. I searched in the library and you weren't there. Where else would I have searched?"

"Yeah, I did say that... well there were some things that I had to do..."

"Ah, sorry. You didn't say that you had to do something prior to going there. But speaking of things that you have to do, Togashi-kun, I would really like to be tutored by you."

I felt afraid. My body hardened. It felt like time had stopped, but just for me. Strangely, Rikka interjected a comment.

"Not allowed." Denied.

"Why was I denied by you, Takanashi-san? I wasn't speaking to you; it was Togashi-kun whom I was addressing."

And she pointed right towards me. How should I reply....?

Well, Rikka denied her. I have to support her decision.

“!”

I have no voice, but I must scream!

Nibutani looked at me with that usual sadistic smile on her face.

“Yu-YUUTA?!” Rikka was also looking like she would faint in surprise.

Ah...I’ve...still...not yet separated...from my past...have I?

But why does she know this.....? This was my second form that I would take when I met an opponent whom I couldn’t defeat as the Dark Flame Master...Of course I wouldn’t be able to transform for a while after I entered that form. That term, Daizana Geruzoniansasu, a representative of my dark past and which has no meaning, had finally come.

I want to die. But I don’t want to die. This is three times as worse as the feeling I had when Rikka told me about my past. Or have I already died and this is my just rewards? Have I lost my memory? Perhaps I’ll die by suffocation after lying down on my desk.

“Yu, Yu, Yuuta?! Will you let your partner attack for you?!”

Rikka began shaking my corpse in concern, but whether it was concern or not, I lifted my face from the desk and extended my hand to say “I’m alright. Thank you.” My body and soul were crumbling. Yet I had to ask.

“How....how do you know these things....?”

“Because I saw them.”

Nibutani came over to my desk, reached in, and pulled out a violet notebook that had “Dark Notebook (Ultimate)” written on it.

This... This is...?! Why is... it here?

No, seriously, why did I put such a dangerous thing in my desk?

“Let’s add another comment. I’ll dedicate this to you: Agapeniku Ooga BURST!”

“Ugh. Gi-GIVE ME THAT!”

I closed the gap between us and pulled as hard as I could to get that notebook from her. While I was hoping to stop her from reading out loud any more, as soon as I returned it backfired on me! She replied with a smirk like a demon’s glared directly at me, continuing to send me into a cycle of life-and-death!

“Well, that one is just a fake!”

“A...fake?!”

It was. I was so overwhelmed with emotions that I didn’t notice that I was being tricked. Amazing....

Yes, if I had actually put that notebook in my desk, then anyone who sat here would have the chance to read it. But I never sealed it away here.

“That’s right! The real thing is in my room. How did you know about it, Nibutani?!”

As I said that, Nibutani returned to her serious tone.

“I heard all about it from your classmate in middle school. That fake notebook you’re playing with was something I made from those stories I heard about. Don’t you remember Satone Shichimiya?”

“Satone Shichimiya? You mean that Shichimiya?!”

Was that Shichimiya, the only one who understood me when I was infected with chunibyou, the one Nibutani talked with? If it’s true, then it all falls into place.

When I was creating my world, I would talk with her about all of it. Of course, that means everything: why I transformed, the conditions to meet for the second form, transformation requirements, etc. So of course she saw my Dark Notebook; she was my only friend after all. Shichimiya transferred schools without giving me a new address. Without having a way to contact me, she probably joined Nibutani's school and began telling stories about me to her. I wonder if she's alright. I don't know what happened, but it makes me happy to reminisce about those times. My soul was starting to restore a bit from the crumbling.

"I memorized those stories Shichimiya told me. If that's the case, then you were really something, eh. Wasn't it something like the most extreme strongest form?"

"Ah, Ah" Resume crumbling.

"Why...Why did she talk to you...Nibutani...!"

"Shichimiya had the highest..."

Nibutani briefly paused to reflect. She closed her eyes and sighed. But instantly, she lightly continued.

"I don't know why she was on good terms with you, but for some reason, she had the highest respect for you, you know? When I heard those stories and saw what a happy face she had, I couldn't help but enjoy them and memorize them. But it turns out you weren't like those stories after all, weren't you?"

Shichimiya had respect for me? But it was I who longed after her.

"Ah, those were some good times." And after that somewhat cold remark, Nibutani faced Rikka and began to address her.

"Takanashi-san, will you be like him some day? One day, will you be suffering in agony due to stories like these?"

“?”

While it looked like Rikka didn't capture what Nibutani was trying to say, I was immediately concerned for her. I wasn't pleased with what she had already said, but Nibutani spit out something even more vile.

“Shouldn't you make a quick recovery from chuunibyou already?”

As if responding to her challenge, Rikka stood up and fired back. “I do not understand your words. What are you trying to say?”

“This girl...she's the real deal.” Nibutani was surprised by Rikka's Evil Eye chuunibyou but in a different way than I was. This left a deep impression. Rikka was talking about something to someone other than me. I'm a bit prone to over-worrying about things, so I was concerned if Rikka would speak to someone else (like I would've told her not to talk to Nibutani at all), but it seems I shouldn't have worried. Whether or not they come to an understanding, I don't know.

“That's the one thing I can't stand...get rid of your chuunibyou and become normal...”

Suddenly Nibutani changed by lowering her voice. Just my intuition here, but it looks like she might have a grudge against chuunibyou patients. Was something done to her or maybe...

Or maybe, she was also once a patient?

“Nibutani, were you once infected with chuunibyou?”

If I break up that confrontation with my question, surely she'll focus on me alone.

“It's not like that. Well...even if I was, that doesn't matter. While I didn't think you were a patient currently, I had no idea what Takanashi-san really was.”

She replied honestly to a tough question. I couldn't think of anything else but admiration...wait. I don't appear to be an ordinary person, but I don't think I'm that bad. In the past I may have been infected with chuunibyou, but it's not something that spreads like measles. At least I think it doesn't.

While I couldn't say this to Isshiki, I could ask Nibutani about it.

"Do you think I'm a bad person?"

"Hmm... Daizana Geruzoniansasu"

"Agh....."

That phrase is seriously a death spell. While I may be the one taking the damage, my anger is transmitting to my contract holder. Rikka stood up beside me, showing an expression that I had never seen before: anger

Usually she seems emotionless, but now her face was full of anger. I didn't think she was capable of emotions like this, but that face was surely red.

"Damage to my contractee, Yuuta, is not allowed. I shall release the power of the Devilish Truth Stare!"

The moment Rikka unveiled her eyepatch, her right eye's power seemed to be in effect. Nibutani's body began to shake. Guess this was a recent addition to her imaginary powers. Whatever it is, I'm sure she'll graciously accept it.

"Devilish Truth Stare Squadron!"

As Rikka said her phrase, Nibutani had a distasteful look on her face.

"What is that?"

Silence engulfed the room. The question of what kind of power did she invoke covered the room. Not one noise was heard until...

"Mori-sama."

I thought Nibutani said something, but this time it was Rikka who cast a spell towards Nibutani.

“.....”

.....

“Do-Don’t call me Mori-sama!” It’s super effective. “Hu, humph! I just wanted to interrupt the mood, so that’s good enough for today. You’ll make a full recovery! Remember that!”

After giving some lines that sounded like an old villain, Nibutani left the room. Well, after all she did to insult me, I’d say she really felt like a villain.

But is being called “Mori-sama” her weak point? Mori-sama... Mori-samar... Mori-summer...Shinka⁵. Ah, I understand now. Looks like that nickname has some bad history for her.

“I...dislike that person.”

“Huh!?”

For her to say something like that unexpectedly, I could only give that kind of reaction.

Dislike...? For Nibutani to get Rikka to say she dislikes her... Quite the terrifying person.

“What do you mean, you don’t like her?”

“That person is composed of light. We are composed of darkness, the opposite structure.”

“Light? The opposition to dark power!?” I get it now. In the past, I was a user of the flames of darkness, so it’s the worst match-up for me!

⁵ The kanji for Shinka’s first name are mori (forest) and natsu (summer).

“Putting that aside, are you alright Yuuta? If our contract does not exist, there is a possibility that one of us will die.”

“Ah, well, this time I thought I would die. But, how did you know Nibutani’s weak point? Was it really your power?”

“Different. This was eavesdropping.”

“Your powers were fading too, weren’t they? Hey!”

Whether or not I was saved today by her powers or if I wasn’t, it doesn’t matter.

“For my powers to be sealed mysteriously before I could use them shows I have more to learn.” Rikka gave a sigh as she continued her frustrated monologue. Hmm? Ah, I see. Was this Rikka holding back in her own way?

For her to use Nibutani’s weakness against her when she had no experience dealing with her was the ultimate last resort for Rikka. Was it for my sake? I feel somehow delighted by that.

“Well, the way doesn’t really matter you know. I wasn’t able to use any death spells, but you truly used your abilities! Thank you.”

And those words made her truly happy. Smiling broadly she added,

“Yuuta gained 5 experience points. The weakness of the light monster, ‘Mori-sama,’ was discovered!”

So we’re now in a RPG.

Oh well, we’ll have to take care around Nibutani. I’d like for my existence to mean something of course.

Chapter 6 : A Custom High School Tradition

“A good morning to everyone in our fine school today! As always this is your loveable principal. I know this is a surprise (and an absolute surprise too!) but next Monday, all grades (YES, all grades!) will go on a trip! Your darling principal could never tell you all to go somewhere specifically, so you get to decide where to go during homeroom this morning! I myself will be deciding where to go at the same time! This has been your favorite principal signing off!”

With that reckless broadcast, Saturday classes had began. Our principal must have Saturday morning fever. I know that was a bad pun, but someone somewhere must’ve found it funny.

This type of event is a common occurrence around here. After the entrance ceremony ended, I thought that relaxed atmosphere would be gone as well, but Isshiki heard from an upperclassman that it’s some kind of tradition for our school. We have a freewheeling principal, and tons of freedom for school events. I doubt this could occur at a public school. Someone in the PTA would hear about it and complain, but I kinda like this style.

As you would expect, the classroom was rowdy after that announcement. Even if our notice just came, it’s still a trip, so we should have some fun wherever we go.

“Wow, this morning is already amazing. The principal here loves to surprise you!”

The one speaking is Tsukumo-sensei (also known as Nana-chan). Today’s first period is math, though I doubt anyone will listen to her lecture this morning.

“Yes, sorry to spoil your fun, but the trip date had already been decided. The surprise broadcast by the principal was definitely exciting though!”

As Nana-chan earnestly expressed her feelings, everyone in the class nodded along with her. Since we've only been here for two months, we're not yet used to this type of atmosphere. Nana-chan is a new teacher as well, so she's likely in the same boat. Maybe next year I'll think it's horrible to break up our patterns, but for now it's pretty amazing that it could happen.

"Now that we've got that out of the way, good morning everyone! Today's first period is math, but since we're on track for the next test, let's decide where we'll go on our trip first!"

The classroom over-boiled with enthusiasm. It was even louder than the previous outburst. I have to give Nana-chan some props. She knew any lesson after that announcement would be useless!

"Alright, it's a bit of trouble, but we should rely on our class reps to help us choose where to go! So, would Nibutani-san and Sakada-kun please come up here?"

As soon as she finished speaking, both Nibutani and Sakada-kun went up to the platform. Since Nibutani is a good speaker, she was the voice of the two while the fast writing Sakada-kun was the scribe. Right people for the right jobs.

"I don't think we could easily decide right now where to go by simple discussion, right? So how about we pass out some paper, you write where you want to go on it, we'll copy those places on the blackboard, and then everyone can vote on where to go? Sound good?"

I have to hand it to her. She was able to think of a plan to handle things quite easily. That fearful light monster which resides inside Nibutani was nowhere to be seen. Right now, she had to be the cutest girl in the class.

"Well done Class King!", "We believe in you Class king!", and other comments came from the male faction behind me. Of course, Nibutani returned

their comments with a pleasant smile. With no other ideas, the Nibutani plan moved onwards. There were no hitches for her decision.

I pondered over the paper in front of me. Hmm, where to go? It's a day trip, so something like an amusement park seems a bit foolish. While I'd like to go to Universal Studios Japan, I doubt we have the budget. So I decided to put "Ninja Town." It's the place to go if you like ninjas.

Once all the ballots were collected, Sakada-kun began transcribing the places on the blackboard. Of course the first option was USJ. Who the hell wrote that?! Next was a barbeque at a public park. Oh, that would be fun. Movie Village, ooh, that's like Ninja Town. The list continued on until we had quite the variety of places to go. Naturally, my ninja vote was up there. The final choice was... Devil World.

.....I think you know who voted for that. The two decided to interfere with that choice. I suppose you can hear your body crumbling after FirObrand swoops down as you visit.

"Hmm, is this all of them? So now we'll vote on where to go. Once again, pass back the papers please!"

And after Nibutani handed everything smoothly, our class decided that our first trip would be to..."Cycle SportsCenter." Not exactly the place I'd choose, but it is the class's will. I'm just glad we didn't decide to go to Devil World. Thankfully it only got two votes.two votes?

"Thank you both! That was quite a quick decision! I enjoyed it as well. Since we decided so quickly, let's begin math class!"

Now there was a storm of boos. Our class thanked Nana-chan, Nibutani, and Sakada-kun very noisily.



It was after school. Or to be more precise, it was after noon. We only go until noon for our Saturday classes. After that, you can enjoy the rest of your Saturday either at clubs, homes, or however you please.

As for Rikka and myself, we were in the process of after school study time day four. Today was a little bit different than the previous three. Instead of studying in our classroom, we were using the classroom for social studies. Since it was only used to store supplies that weren't being used and no one was using it for a clubroom, it was definitely a good place to become quiet and study. We put two desks facing each other, like in our classroom, and got to work.

Well, if I have to be honest, we're using this room to throw Nibutani off. In order for her not to interfere with our studying, we're studying in a secret location. Alright, that's enough with this. Let's begin studying!

"If Nibutani comes in here, we're gonna run for it."

"Understood. I also dislike her." Rikka began to shake a bit. That's certainly showing your dislike of someone. I also shake whenever I've had a bad experience.

In return, Nibutani dislikes those suffering from chuunibyou. I'm sure there's a reason behind it, but I've not heard why. I think the idea that she maybe once suffered from it would be a valid reason; but perhaps there's something else driving her. Regardless, there's no love lost between her and Rikka.

I can't help Nibutani in her goals. As I once had the disease, I don't have a reason to hate it, so I don't understand why it's so bad in her opinion.

"Yuuta, I have a countermeasure for light monsters for you to use."

I was in my delusion mode when Rikka's voice brought me back to the real world.

"Huh, a countermeasure? You mean something that could be used against Nibutani?"

"Yes. Equip yourself with this."

What she handed over to me was a cute black and white polka dotted scrunchie. I get the impression this was handmade rather than purchased.

In addition to being a chuunibyou patient, Rikka is also a high school girl. Of course she would have good taste in picking something like this out. Unfortunately, others might not think it's as cool as I do though.

"This is Mufaasa. Formal name: Agrichemical Mufaasa. This has many ingredients in it to counteract against hostile forces. Therefore, Yuuta should be safe while equipped with this."

"Why would you think this is fashionable for me? And how does it have abilities? I'm not even relieved it's called Agrichemical but...if it does have lots of ingredients, then maybe. Mufaasa?"

"Yes. Mufaasa."

Hmm. I feel a scream coming on. It seems I'm quite picky about fashion accessories. I'd like to wear it to enjoy the effects it'd have but I'm not sure it's intents would be communicated to others.

.....In short, people would get the wrong idea about me when I was wearing it! I can sympathize with Rikka and I even sympathize with what she's trying to do. I'm somewhat moved and happy, but...

".....I'm incredibly grateful for your thoughtfulness Rikka, but I can't accept this."

Rikka looked at me in confusion and slightly tilted her head.

“Mufaasa would... look really nice on a girl!”

“You talk in a masculine manner, but your face is cute.”

“Don’t you dare start thinking of me as a boy in woman’s clothing!”

I don’t know what my face really looks like, but my intention was to go for a somewhat wild look. Damn it, Isshiki treats me like a girl too. This is so annoying!

“Initiate Devilish Truth Stare. Invoking contractee equipment.”

“Aren’t you recklessly awakening your powers?! It’s supposed to be sealed, so don’t use it so haphazardly!”

As usual, that eye was gold and it hadn’t changed in sparkliness. While I’m glad that it hadn’t changed, there is no way I’m giving into this matter.

There is absolutely no way a guy could wear Mufaasa and people would understand what it meant! If Isshiki saw it, he’d certainly comment that my feminine charms were leveled up. Besides, Nibutani would just look at me with her sadistic smile. Isn’t that defeating the purpose of it?! There’s no way I’m losing this argument. Alright...

“Listen to me. What would you say if, for example, I decided to wear a skirt?”

Rikka thought about it for a bit before an inappropriate reply left her lips,

“It wouldn’t match.” Combined with a broad smile, you could feel the idiocy radiating from her. But I feel a bit relieved by that idiotic statement. At least I know for sure she couldn’t match my argument. I win this round. After motivating myself, I began my return volley.

"Since a skirt wouldn't match what a boy wears, this Mufaasa has to be a girl's accessory. Only girls will be able to utilize the effects it provides! Thus the real beneficiary of Agrichemical Mufaasa is Rikka! Yes, I deem it so!"

"Oh!" Rikka looked up mysteriously and began clapping her hands for some reason. Guess it was for my victory. Oh, this matches the applause I've heard in my head before. I'm posing in victory. Yes, I've been saved!

"So I'm sorry, but I can't accept it."

"Oh well. It's attached to your bag now."

.....

As one would expect, it didn't appear my victory at all. Any comparison I could think of would sound cruddy..... Let's just move on and study.

"I...I got it. Well, now that I have a countermeasure against Nibutani, let's study. Since Ms. Nibutani interfered with us, we weren't able to study yesterday."

As I was talking, I noticed that Mufaasa was indeed attached to my bag. That's fast! Well, I could just say that my little sister did it I guess.

"Alright! Today we tackle factorization! Let's go!"

"For the time being, that topic is rejected!"

"What's with the 'for the time being'? Aren't you going to study?!"

"Factoring will bedone tomorrow. Tomorrow I'll be ready for it."

So that means you're not ready now. I breathed a deep sigh.

"So that's how it is..... You sure we'll do it tomorrow?"

"Absolutely. It is understood by both to be done tomorrow."

“Alright, then I guess we’ll do a review of probability today.”

I had already prepared a set of questions to work on today and went to pull them from my bag. Alas, my zipper was broken and the questions were caught in the zipper. I pulled as hard as I could, but they spread all over the floor when they came out.

“Ah!”

All of my sheets fell between us. I squatted and began to pick them up. Rikka also squatted and picked them up by stretching out to get them.

As we stretched out to get them, our hands overlapped on one...

At that time, we heard the door to the classroom open. Our hands were closer than a centimeter from each other’s, but we looked towards the source of the noise together.

At the door was Isshiki.

"Ah, So...sorry! Take your time!" And after saying that, he shut the door and left.

“Was that Togashi and Takanashi-san getting it on!? Ooh, what were you two up to?!” As I was standing up, I heard Isshiki’s rebuke from the hallway. You could see the door slightly ajar and two eyes looking through it. He really thought we were up to something.

“Nah, I had seen you guys picking up those pieces of paper and I chuckled thinking that I’d surprise you and hear you scream. I didn’t think I’d come into that awkward atmosphere though!” He finally came into visit during those lines.

“Are you guys studying? How’s it going? Progressing well? Ah, I see what’s going on. There’s a lot of things you don’t know about math? Well, teach

me all you know!" While Isshiki was looking at me while saying that, he moved his eyes towards Rikka.

She had hidden the lower half of her face with the papers she picked up so Isshiki could only see the top half. I was also shocked. Uh huh, she's definitely overpowering. For Isshiki, who loved to chat with girls (I feel like I had a fraction of his capabilities), this had to be a surprise.

Yesterday, she was fine talking with Nibutani, but it doesn't look to be the same with Isshiki. Was it a specific difference in partners or is she not able to talk with boys? Regardless, she gets along fine with me.

She had hardened her eyes in a pose. I was also stuck in a position from Isshiki's appearance.

Isshiki replied in a lonely tone, "So it's like that huh? Well, I was curious how your studying was going, but I see that Togashi's alright over there. Sorry for bothering you guys."

"Ye, yeah. Well, I'm not sure what to say... but you're not bothering us... right?"

Of course I got to cheer up my buddy when he's depressed, but it seems I just added oil to the fire.

"Shu-Shut up! Just go and do your studying! Study with your girl and I won't talk to you guys! Yeah! I'll go and find my own person to teach how to study! Hehe, then we'll come back and study! Later!"

Isshiki left the social studies room chuckling with an evil smile on his face.

Really, math's the only subject that I could claim to be really good at. I'm alright at everything else though. Maybe Isshiki could be called "smart, but still an idiot." Oh well, he's still my loveable sidekick.

“Yuuta, was that your, no, the Devil King’s underling?”

Rikka turned to me with a frightened look as Isshiki left the room. Yesterday I was the Devil King and now I have an underling. Just how far is this going to go....

Wait, wouldn’t that mean I’d be the frightening one?

“Nah, that’s my close friend number 1. He’s a bit weird, but he’s a nice guy overall. I’m sure he’d be delighted if you spoke to him the next time you meet.”

“He is a good underling. Fit to be the first of the Four Horsemen. Understood. My contractee’s underling is the same as my own. The next we meet, my security level will be lowered.”

Isshiki, you’re the first of the Four Horsemen and yet you’re still looked down upon. Poor guy. I don’t really have three other close buddies that could join the group, but that’s alright.

“Oh yeah, I was wondering about this a while ago. Is it alright for your Devilish Truth Stare to be constantly shining like that? I get the feeling Isshiki got quite the supernatural experience.”

Rikka, taken aback, quickly moved to fix her eyepatch. “The Devilish Truth Stare is omnipotent. I have full control over its use. Even if it were constantly shining, there would be no problems. I seal it so that it’s immense evil power does not bring harm to Yuuta.”

She’s able to turn confusion into an explanation of her powers. Well, she did the same with Nana-chan and again with Nibutani and the Devilish Truth Stare Squadron. Every one of those powers I’ve experienced has been dangerous. So this means my life has been in peril how many times now? You’d think I would’ve asked before.

Rikka took out a compact while I was in thought and began looking in it. She subtly adjusted her eyepatch until,

“The seal is complete.”

“So with this on, I won’t be in any danger?”

“Probably.”

“That’s an incredibly vague seal! How is that better than one that’s perfect....Oh well, it’s alright. Now, why don’t we get back to studying?”

Instantly, Rikka’s eye began to water. She really hates math, huh? Looking into the one you can see, the dislike she has towards it is clearly visible.

“We should get to studying....”

I handed out my handmade problem set and we began to study.

When the bell rang to signal the end of the day, we were already in front of the school gates. As usual, Rikka had left before me, but she waited for me at the gate today. I get the sense we’re becoming a bit closer. That makes me feel happy inside.

Aside from that, wouldn’t you say today’s studying was like someone preparing to take a Tokyo University exam? Despite the heat, we were able to seriously study (with some chatting too) from noon until the final bell rang. Though we were interrupted, it wasn’t the same as yesterday. Since tomorrow has factorization, it seems today went pretty smoothly.

If she’s able to break things down like she did today, then she’ll easily pass the re-test. I really hope the effort that Rikka’s putting in will pay off in the end.

Unfortunately, tomorrow being Sunday breaks up this pace. I think I’ll suggest that we won’t meet tomorrow and Rikka should study on her own.

“Since tomorrow is Sunday, we’ll take a break from our study meetings. I’d be pleased if you reviewed over the questions we’ve covered up until now at your house instead.”

Rikka went “Eh....” and brought her gaze to mine.

Huh? Does she really want to study? I tried not to assume that she didn’t want to, but the classrooms and library will be closed tomorrow, even though parts of our school will be open.

As if she was reading my mind, Rikka said, “We’ll study at my house.”

“Huh? Is that alright? I don’t want to be a bother....”

“You will not be a bother. It’ll be fine if you come over anytime.”

Her words were a big shock to me. I was at a loss. In a confused voice I said, “Alright, let’s do it! I guess we’ll be studying at your house tomorrow!”

A shrewd plan was made. Or at least it seemed shrewd to me.

In a second I could see a cute smile blooming on Rikka’s face.

“Then I shall see you tomorrow. My house is located here. Come at noon. Then, byebye!”

Even though she was talking so fast, she handed over a piece of notebook paper that listed her address (Present world version). The moment it was in my hand she was off.

Did she... prepare this beforehand?

She’s quite shrewd as well. It’s a bit amusing.

Chapter 7 : Afterschool Study Time in Rikka's Apartment

It was noon on the fifth day since we started studying after school. I had arrived at the address Rikka had given me yesterday. You could call it her house, but in reality it was a small apartment.

Outside apartment #1 on the first floor, you could read the somewhat difficult characters that made up Takanashi. Looks like this is her place. I began looking for an intercom, but I couldn't find one. That's somewhat rare in this age. Oh well, guess I'll have to knock instead.

Before I could touch the door, it opened as if there were infrared detectors in the hallway and I saw Rikka. "Please come in."

"Ah, pardon me."

I'm curious if that was a special talent of hers or she had really installed infrared lasers.

Rikka was not in her uniform today. Apparently, it was casual Sunday. As you may have guessed already, her attire was black-themed. I couldn't help but notice the contrast between her black sleeveless shirt and her pale shoulders. Next on the list was the black frilly skirt and black knee-highs highlighting her absolute territory. Looking at Rikka herself, you'd get the impression she was defenseless, but yet all of her clothes had some sort of dark theme. Goth alert.

Oh yeah, I was in my uniform. I don't have the confidence to go to someone's house wearing my casual clothing. Besides, I'm still a student; I can pull this off.

Her apartment was 1 room with living, dining, and kitchen areas. Big enough for one person to live alone. There was a huge chest of drawers in the living area. I imagine there's a lot of dark girl clothing in there. Other than that, there was nothing in particular to note. It's just an ordinary room. Desk, games,

manga, computer, etc. It almost looked like there was a boy living here, but that's due to the chuunibyou nature of the owner and her strange eccentricities. I used to want my room to be dark and filled with cool golden dragon keychains, but it looks like Rikka isn't that type of person.

"I live by myself."

When you say it like that, it feels really lonely.

"Well, I got that impression...wait, where are your parents?"

"They're separated."

It'll be hard to press more about her parents after hearing that. Wait, it'd be weird if that's how this ends. Forgive me, I have to hear more.

"Is there a reason?"

"I suppose so. The problem was me."

After hearing that, I wasn't pleased with her parents. Looks like they stuffed her away in this apartment and lived separately.

"That's a bit cruel isn't it....?" As I asked that, I felt a breeze fly by in response. That's not the answer I was looking for. I can't help but worry about her, but is it right for me to step into this problem?

Rikka seemed to read my mind,

"I really like living by myself. This lifestyle isn't that bothersome."

And yet you sound so isolated when saying that. Today her esper powers seem to be active.

"But what about meals and that kind of thing? They might not want to talk to you, but surely they send you money."

"I receive an allowance. That money allows me to eat various meals."

Allowance huh? It was that difficult to live together? Perhaps I don't understand her parents and their concerns, but I just can't understand why someone would live away from their child and just give them money.

While looking at my concern, Rikka added,

"I'm alright. My contractee Yuuta is here. Now there's two people."

Hearing that made me really happy. We've not even known each other for a week (though we're contracted somehow), but she already wants me around her?

"Now then, it's lunchtime."

"Oh, you've not eaten yet? Sorry, I ate before I came here."

Our appointment was at noon and I didn't want to bother her for food, so I quickly ate some cup ramen before I came over.

"Oh....it's homemade...."

"What?! You made it for me?!"

"Somewhat, yes."

"Somewhat... well, alright, since you went through the trouble to make it, I'll eat it."

That's a bit strange for her to do. Is she the kind of person who likes to entertain guests?

As she said, "Wait and I'll prepare it quickly. Sit around there," she donned a white apron and went into the kitchen to prepare the food.

Her carpet was a bit messed up, but other than that, it was a clean room. I felt a bit awkward sitting on it, so I went to a chair by Rikka's desk. There were a lot of study materials on top of her desk beside her computer. The bookshelves

were packed with manga. The desk itself was similar to one that was specialized for writing. I felt a bit of desk envy just looking at it. I was a little bit curious what kind of books she read, so I took a look and found some unique titles.

Counteracting Aggressive Aliens Manual, How to Talk to Aliens, etc...

There wasn't a normal book to be found!

She seemed to read books about wu xing, Cthulhu, and various manga about those mythical tales. I imagine those are the kind of books you read when you're suffering from chuunibyou. My old self was making a bit of a return, so I decided to look at one. Let's start with the most interesting one.

As soon as I pulled *How to Talk to Aliens* from the bookshelf and began to read it, Rikka stuck her head out of the kitchen and commented "Oh, Yuuta, you're not allowed to touch the computer." I lifted my head and looked towards her. My eyes met her one and she blinked. She immediately came over to me.

I didn't touch the computer, which towered over everything else on the desk immensely. Rikka was distracted as she came over.

"Yu, Yuuta, what is that book?"

"Let's see, it's *How to Talk to Aliens....*"

Rikka let out a sigh of relief. "Yuuta, you are to continually read that book. Master it and talk to aliens. You are not allowed to touch the computer at any time. Also, you are not allowed to touch any other book!"

"Go, Got it."

With her menacing look pointed right at me, I could only nod in reflex.

She's probably ensuring that no one sees anything that would embarrass her.... I want to look around, but I should just read. The biggest thing that

worries her is someone looking at something on the computer that would make her want to die. But hey, she might not be thinking about that at all.

That answers the computer warning, but what about all the other books? Perhaps that too is bothering her. Oh well, no use thinking about it.

After returning my nod, Rikka turned and went back to the kitchen. Looking at her, I couldn't help but think that the combination of the apron on her goth outfit made her look like a maid. With just her around, you could feel the stress level was high. After arriving in the kitchen, her face peeked out and she asked me,

"Yuuta. I'm retrieving drinks as well. What would you like?"

"Coffee."

I immediately responded. I suppose you could say that was a conditioned reflex. It's not that I really like it; rather it's too bitter and I don't care for it. Truthfully, I'd prefer a Cafe Latte. But when I thought I would be cool, I ordered it all the time. Drinking coffee made me cool. It's the foundation of that cool image, but it's definitely a symptom of chuunibyou. I was trying to break the habit as best I could at the moment.

Wait a minute, a girl living alone shouldn't have that! What was I expecting?

"Understood. Currently it is hot outside, so I shall prepare iced coffee."

Ah. Yeah, even though she's a female high school student, she's a chuunibyou patient. Not out of the ordinary for her to have that....

But there's still something else that worries me. Rikka poured the ice coffee from the refrigerator into a cup, but there was still something not out yet...

“Yuuta, do you want some syrup?”

“No, I like mine black!”

Another immediate response..... Damn it, stop being an idiot! My body was too conditioned to respond like that. Do I want milk? Ah, you said you wanted it black....The mistake kept going on and on.

“Here we go. One for Yuuta and one for me.”

As if she was emphasizing that mistake, she brought over a dark black drink and a light brown drink. Of course, the black one was for me. She placed it and the milk on the low table. She’s still a girl; no black coffee for her!

“Mine has been sealed. Yuuta, you cannot drink mine.”

I’m not sure I could stand drinking mine black. Is it alright with you if I only take a couple sips? The only other option I had, iced coffee, had crumbled right before me. Incidentally, it seems manga has had an influence to popularize the term “iced coffee” as “cold coffee.” Perhaps that’s the work of a great detective.

But you know...um...The whole drinking coffee makes me cool isn’t helping my rehabilitation. This isn’t...

Five minutes passed as I read her book and drank my coffee. By the time I finished my cup of joe, Rikka’s homemade lunch was done.

“Here you go. It’s homemade.”

The “homemade meal” she placed on the table was the same type of cup ramen I had eaten earlier, but some onions and egg were added to the ramen. Does she think I’m an idiot....?

“I don’t know how to properly reply to this, but its... time to eat....”

“The eggs are the homemade portion.”

“Do you think I’m a fly!” There it is. Wait, is there one in the room? I don’t see one.

“There is one on the ceiling.”

“Are you serious?!”

“Joking.”

I’m not sure that’s a joke Rikka-san. Looks like the Rikka who spends time here is more of a happy personality than at school. Well, not to say that she’s not happy at school.

“That’s not really a joke.”

“O-kay! Sorry!”

During this idiotic conversation, I was enthusiastically eating Rikka’s not-so homemade cup ramen. It had the usual cup ramen flavor, but it felt a bit tastier than usual this time.

“Is this your usual style of cooking?”

“It’s a bit different. Today’s version is special. It’s homemade.”

She’s so particular about it being homemade. Her voice emphasizes that portion.

“So what’s the usual style?”

“Boxed meals from the convenience store.”

“That’s like a bachelor……!”

I’m concerned. Deeply concerned. You won’t be able to eat very healthy if you’re not able to cook your own meals. Like that training papa blood I

mentioned earlier, some kind of meddling mama blood is flowing through my veins. This might be promising.

“.....Are you planning to eat like this forever? They’re not the healthiest option...”

“Huh? Can you cook Yuuta?”

“Well, I don’t want to boast, but I’m probably as good as your average male high school student. Both my parents work, so I have to take care of my sisters and dog.”

“Oh, I should have realized the flames of darkness user had cooking abilities. So your cooking must be tinted by those flames.”

“Sorry, but I don’t have that particular ability. Are you alright alone? Can you make your own meals?”

“Hmm. Sorry to disappoint you, but there’s not enough materials today. Maybe another time.”

“I see. Got it.”

Rikka was smiling a lot today. I’m not sure how talking about someone’s eating habits could make someone so happy. Today feels more like she invited me over for lunch rather than studying. After our little break to eat Rikka’s not-so homemade cup ramen, I focused on why I came over.

“So, since our stomachs are full, let’s get to studying!”

“There’s something else to do today.”

“Huh?”

“Today is my death day.”

“What?! You’re actually dead?!”

"I was mistaken. It's my birthday."

"Don't mix up the day you were born with the day you died! That makes it sound like today's the day you were born anew!"

"It was a necessity for my contractee to be present today."

"What?!"

"It is party time."

Something else flew around in the room over us. What's this? Were you preparing for a party?

"Is it?"

Now that I look at her, her clothing looks different than earlier. Instead of that black attire, she's now dressed in red. It looks somewhat Santa-ish, but it's more gothic than what Santa would wear. Plus there's a skirt. A new Santa has been born. The reign of dark Santa begins today.

"Wow. You really changed to look like Santa!"

"Is this not celebration attire?"

"That's quite the difficult question to answer, wouldn't you say?"

I really wanted to celebrate her birthday with her, but somehow it seemed like I was too nervous. Wearing a Santa-ish outfit is very different than what I would expect.

But what the hey, you're supposed to celebrate on a birthday. Today was supposed to be a day off anyways. Let's party.

Our two person birthday party afternoon bash had started.

“Happy Birthday!” We celebrated by shooting her prepared crackers into the air and yelling that required phrase. With only two people yelling it, it felt somewhat weaker than it should be.

Hmm, the only close friend I could call would be Isshiki, but Isshiki’s at work today and I can’t get in touch with him. Rikka also doesn’t have anyone she could call... Oh well, guess we’ll have to party by ourselves.

Rikka still looks pleased. I don’t know if that brave girl is happy from being the focus of our celebration or what, but that Dark Santa looks so happy cleaning up the mess from the crackers. She’s brought a little bit of winter into summer.

“Oh yes. We also have cake. This time it’s really homemade.”

“Oooh! You gotta have cake with a birthday! Good thinking!”

You can’t forget a birthday cake on a birthday, especially when it’s your own. And yet Rikka made one for her own birthday. She’s alone all the time. Here... at school.....Always alone...

I’m a bit... different... in that respect. Maybe it was luck, but back then I had someone who understood me. Back then, that person listened to all my made-up stories. Now it’s my turn to be the rescuer that Shichimiya was for me. If I didn’t have her, I would have been alone all the time too.

That’s why, when I look at Rikka’s happy expression, I felt like I had to say, “I’ll do my best to help you study properly.” I’m her sympathizer. We’re in this together. There was one more statement I added mentally: “That’s just how I feel about this.”

I heard Rikka walking back from the refrigerator with her “homemade” birthday cake in tote. By then, I had already forgotten about something. Rikka

cannot cook. Um... what did she put into this cake when I couldn't see how she was cooking it? I had forgotten all about that possibility.

"Um... is this...what would you call it? Oh, is it dark matter?"

"Huh? The cake?"

"There's no extensive term for it?! Well, if I have to do my usual retort, then why is it that shade of black!?"

This wasn't the black of chocolate; this was pitch black. The first thing I could think to match was dark matter. The only food that I could think to match it were black soy beans. The decorations were also absurd. You could just barely tell this dark black thing was supposed to be a cake someone would make in this world. There were golden leaf prints around it too as if they were highlighting her chuunibyou nature. Apparently she wanted to highlight the color of her Devilish Truth Stare. That's quite skillful! Granted, while it might be skillful, it's not the best thing to do to impress someone else.

"The black is due to sesame seeds. I used some sesame paste to imitate classic Japanese-style cooking."

"Why did you do something idiotic like that!? Come back to the future and use white cream instead!"

"If it's not black, it will not have the best flavor."

.....Really, she just wants an incredibly new taste. I can't help it anymore. I'll have to throw my lot in with this one too.

Well, it might not be as bad as I think. While it may look bad on the outside, the inside might surprise me. Maybe if I think about it like that, perhaps my death flag won't signal.

“Is that so? The best huh? Well, from what I see, it really looks tasty. Let’s eat it!”

“Before that, Yuuta has to blow out the candles.”

And of course she lit the candles on this birthday cake (it is one right?) with matches.

“Wait a sec! It’s pointless to light candles on a cake if the birthday person doesn’t blow out them out! Especially when they made the cake.”

“Oh well.”

Rikka brought the cake closer to her face.

The room was lit by the sun’s rays coming inside, but we could still see the bright lights of the candles. It was like a winter illumination. Beautiful. Well, this might not be the right season, but they do match Rikka’s Santa outfit.

As Rikka blew on the candles, the small flames moved in the wind.

“I’m one hundred and sixteen years old today.”

“I think not your majesty!”

“I am a being of the Underworld you cur! Congratulate me, congratulate me!”

“What role are you playing?! Wait... What do you mean ‘Congratulate me!’ I am congratulating you!”

“Then give me a present.”

Cleverly extorting a present from me huh? I fell right into the storm.

“I don’t think so pal.”

“Call me Rikka.”

"Yes, yes, I know that. But I don't have a present ready for the occasion..."

"Anything's fine."

"Anything's fine huh... Alright, it's a bit cliché, but how about I'll get anything you say? But only something I can get today."

"Limitation placed: must be today."

And for a while nothing was said. I started to think about this. Well, it's not that I wasn't thinking earlier; if I gave her a bad present, she wouldn't be happy on this special day.

.....Soon ten minutes had passed since her confirmation.

"Say what you're thinking!"

I couldn't bear the silence, so I had to give a retort somehow.

"I've narrowed it down to two things. But they would be difficult to obtain."

"Oh, how will you choose?"

"Shall I pick an easier one?"

"No... well, as long as they're simple." I'm feeling awfully generous today. Normally I wouldn't give a single thing, but since it's a special day, I guess it's fine.

"Then..."

She pulled out a magic marker she hid previously.

"Can I write something on your face?!"

"Ok."

I might have agreed, but that doesn't mean I have to like what she's doing.... After being fulfilled with my thoughts, I closed my eyes.

"Please don't make it too conspicuous."

"Even if I lied, it would be alright."

Rikka opened the cap of her magic marker and wrote something on the back of my left hand for some reason. I timidly opened my eyes.

"Ugh, what is this?!"

"Execution of a new contract."

On my hand was a single hiragana character in black, round handwriting:
"yu."

"This makes it seem like I'm going to a hot springs!"

"It has a different meaning. This is a fragment of a highly potent spell."

".....What kind of effects are you talking about this time?"

"It's....embarrassing."

Well I'm embarrassed enough already! Guess that magic spell is already effective on the user.

"Do you want to guess?"

"Nah, just tell me."

That's how it usually goes. Once she starts talking, I'll get the gist of the matter. I'd never be able to guess what any of this is actually for otherwise.

"This is a permanent magical fragment. If you look here,"

I looked and drawn on the back of Rikka's left hand was the same character.

"Having these will make our contract considerably stronger. Breaking it will be difficult."

"In other words, I can't escape?"

"Stuck together like glue."

"Wow... that gag is old, especially coming from a girl like you."

How old is that thing anyways?

But anyways, it looks like we're together while Rikka is studying. I get it. I feel the same way too. I'll see this contract out until the very end. I'll set you free from the shackles of extra lessons.

"Oh yeah, is there another fragment?"

"Well, it's embarrassing."

Now we're starting to get into a routine.

"Do you want to guess?"

"Ah....."

Does she really want me to guess? She's a strange one.

"To be honest, I have to take a re-test in science. I'd like your help."

"What?!"

I couldn't help but let out a panicked cry after hearing that. Please tell me she doesn't have to take extra classes for it too.

"So tell me what was your grade?"

I timidly asked her. Please tell me it's not that illusionary...

"I got a 31. Quite disappointing."

"That's really disappointing!"

Obviously, anything below a 40 is a failing mark. When you think about it that way, it's not that disappointing. Did she study for any of these? Surely she wants to raise her academic rankings... right? Wait... A new fear suddenly came over me.

"....By the way, what were your other grades?"

Again, I could only timidly ask. She bombed in science and math, but what else?

"Japanese was a 100."

"You went from one extreme to the other!"

"Society was a 99. I'm disappointed."

"Yeah yeah, that's really disappointing..."

Please apply your talents to math now. Why can't she do this well in math and science? I can't guess by looking at her.

"Japanese is merely kanji, so I can study it freely. I enjoy world history, so society is easy. Knowing about myths is one of my strengths. I think Buddha and the history of Japan are cool too. I really like the thousand-armed Goddess of Mercy."

As she explained why she was able to do well in those subjects, I could feel her chest puff up with pride. Not literally of course. But, you know, wouldn't having knowledge of myths, characters, and all that be necessary for any chuunibyou patient? Ah, I get it now. That's why she's so enthusiastic for those subjects! Then,

"So let's just say that all of these formulas for math are really cool!"

No, I didn't yell it. But they are vital for math.

“That would be permissible.”

“Alright....”

And now the planning for her birthday present ended with me getting the job of looking after her science education. Stepping aside for a moment, her grade for English was 78. A bit on the upper range, but I can't really comment on it knowing my talents.

After the discussion, we began to eat Rikka's homemade cake together. Before I took a bite, Rikka commented, “The best....”

That again. I wonder if she's saying that just because she made it...Should I sample it before I give a retort? Well, I don't want to bring down Rikka's mood today. This is really trying my patience. I don't know what to do. Let's just eat it whole and see what happens.

“This really is the best....”

It was the truth. I couldn't lie. It was delicious and didn't make me want to curse her in the name of sweets. As a sweets loving guy, I wasn't giving this up.

“This is the immense power of the Devilish Truth Stare. Even the cakes it helps make with its power are amazing.”

It's only great because you just made that power up. I'll grant you that this is really good, but how positive can you be?

“Now then, let's..”

“Yuuta, let's play a game.”

And she pointed towards the TV. Over there I could see... a MOX.

“How do you have one of those?! Wow! I've missed having one of these, well it's not like that. I have one of these too, but I never thought... wow....!”

My theory that I was the only one who had one of these not-so-popular game systems crumbled. Damn it! She even has the 300 model? That just raises the bar. Our MOX is broken. But that's really the big MOX game system I see on the stand underneath the television.

Wow. She has PyuuO too. What kind of person is she? Not only does she have western games, but old games as well. I doubt that'd apply to Showa era songs and western music though.

Looks like today's study session is about to be extended and it's not for studying. Usually it's Rikka who looks at me and I give in, but today's different. Well, it's her birthday, so she's gotta have fun. Besides, mine's broken, so I couldn't have fun like this anyways.

Let's start with a two-player game. Wait, she mostly has one-player games, so I guess we'll have to play a parody shooting game. I thought I knew about that when I turned it on, but the player select screen was a shock.

Why is the main character an octopus? Seems his ancestor was rich and had a lot of influence in the area. Wait, now I know a squid can't be the main character! This might sound selfish, but I don't think there's any way that a squid could sell a game!

I chose the penguin since I seem to have a connection to them somehow. Though I never got the Golden Apple in that other game, I hope I can do well with him here. Rikka chose the octopus. Now then, the game⁶ started and I heard that BGM I had really missed.

Hidebu! Hidebu! And the screen was already jam packed with creatures. It's been a long time guys. Since it was the first time I've played in a while, my penguin quickly died. No Golden Apple for me today. I passed the controller over to Rikka and watched her godlike play. She beat the mysterious rock-paper-

⁶ It is highly probable that they are playing *Parodius* for the MSX console.

scissors game, found the “how would you ever look there?!” warp, and didn’t die even once before the ending. I felt a little bit of pride go down the drain.

“Please watch the ending.”

“Hmm, sure the octopus is really good in this one, but wouldn’t it be that you’re really good at this game Rikka?”

“I like it. That’s about all I can say for it.”

Ah, well, looks like my pride is slowly coming back up.

“Do you have a beat’-em-up game?”

“I don’t, but I guess *Great Uprising* might work.”

That’s not a beat’-em-up game, that’s a war game! Besides, “*Great Uprising*? Isn’t that called *Sumabura* instead?”

“Sigh, Yuuta, that’s different. This is *Great Uprising*. That’s the only name I’ve ever known it as.”

No, that’s not the formal name of it, but that doesn’t matter. I’m not giving up this time. *Great Uprising* huh? Wouldn’t that be *GreUp* for short? Maybe you’re thinking of another big war game. Besides, *Sumabura* has that feeling where you go “Ah, ah. That game!”

“No, it’s *Sumabura*.”

“*Great Uprising*!”

“*Sumabura*!”

“*Great Uprising*!”

AGH! It’s a duel over titles with neither side giving in. Neither of us paid attention to the television screen. You know, this is probably the first argument we’ve had since we first met and it’s over some trivial thing. Nonono, I’m not

giving in to this girl. You might think this is stupid, but this is personal. I'm not giving in to her.

"Alright, why don't we settle this in the game?"

"Oh, I'd like to see that! Show me your real power Yuuta!"

"Sounds good to me. First round is without items. This way, you can't neglect your ammo."

I immediately began setting up the round. This time I chose the Pink Demon. Rikka chose the Yellow Mouse. That's not the best looking character, but it's useless if you can't use its lightning speed.

"How about this stage?"

"I wouldn't think of any other stage to play on!"

This is a strange way to bond. Still, this is a battle. My prep mode has been initiated. I'm not going to lose to her.

It might be bad for the environment, but I plan to cut down all the trees. It'll be an easy victory! But let's wait-and-see. I don't know her skill at this one, so it might be best not to rush. It might not work out too. If her skills from the first game carry over, she might be really good. Keep everything in check.

Since no one is moving, the game can't go on. Thus,

"Aren't you the strongest? Why don't you move?"

She's taunting me. I'll do whatever it takes to win.

"Humph."

Like I'd had a few glasses already, I began to move towards her with full force. As I checked the sky, I saw it was filled with electricity. That's a strategy even a noob would use. It's just some basic protection for far range attacks.

Rikka, reading my attacks, grounded herself across from me. There's still some more to go before I know her true capabilities. This battle is so tense already.

If I played normally, there'd be no way I could win, but if I feint, there might be a chance I could pull this out. Watch what I've been practicing all these years for!

I'll begin moving forward like I was just a casual player. Then, as Rikka begins to doubt my abilities, I'll move before it's too late. That time will decide if I'll win or if I'll lose this game.

Electricity above, traps below, and then there's the meteors that my opponent is throwing down. Perfect to turn the tide. Use up all your ammo.

"Hehehe, I've not even shown my real power. Devilish Truth Stare power released! LIMITER RESCEND! Hahaha!"

During her invincibility time, Rikka removed her eyepatch and began viewing the screen with both eyes. The shackles are off I see. I guess I haven't shown my real power yet either.

The game went back and forth with each of us playing offense and defense. Somehow I was able to pull out a victory. It was a dangerous match.

"I.. I did it, didn't I?! This was the first time I was driven into a corner."

"This.. I was just going easy on you! I'm the strongest.... One more match Yuuta!"

After losing, she still wants to make up for her loss. You already know how these hands treated you last time.

"Is that the strongest excuse? I've heard that from ordinary people."

"Uuuu, I give up. This is the first time I've lost. Good game. I'll train to become the strongest. Handshake."

“Hehe, good call. Challenge me again anytime!”

And so we firmly shook hands. It was like a fiery friendship being formed on one of those adolescent dramas.

Incidentally, this was the first time I’ve played with anyone other than my sister, so it’s no wonder I was pinned down. My sister is a henchman compared to Rikka. This bout was likely the same for Rikka.

While the WiO can connect to the net, the version on there can’t use multiplayer. That’s another benefit of the original game.

“So, we’ll have to battle again in *Sumabura*.”

“Next time I’ll get you to call it *Great Uprising*! Besides, I want to have another bout with you!”

She wants to continue? That rascal!

In the end, I had fun playing *Sumabura* again in today’s white-hot battle. I imagine that, like I would if mine worked, Rikka would be playing it again and again. She had the best smile while playing today. It’s the one she has when she’s making things up; the cutest smile to bloom on her face.

For example, think about the second contract that she amused herself with today. Though we were supposed to be studying, it’s nice to see her regular life and playing like this. I really didn’t see this was coming.

I didn’t know anything about Rikka. She has chuunibyou, hates studying, likes games, and today’s her birthday. While I feel I know her more now, I still don’t know much. I don’t know why she picked me to make a contract with, for example. Or even more fundamental, why did she contract chuunibyou? Up until now, she’s acted how I did, so I thought of her illness like the kind I once had. But when things like today come around, I don’t know what to do. Sorry for going off on a tangent. It’s a bad habit of mine.

Studying is an important thing, but times like these are also important. She's given me the title of contractee, and though I've not accepted it, and don't want to know more about it, maybe it's not too bad. I'll look forward to times like this and the made-up stories. Perhaps that's why she replied like that.

Thus today, even though it was short, I learned a bit about Rikka. It was an awfully important day.



"Alright. Things are alright here, so I guess I'll be heading home....."

Right after our game ended, I checked my watch and it was 18:00. I handed the controller over to Rikka and looked to her with a disappointed expression.

"Already.....?"

"Sorry. I'm in charge of cooking dinner tonight. If I don't go shopping, we won't have anything for me to fix."

".....I see. I guess you do have to go shopping. Then I'll escort you."

"Nonono, I'm alright. I can get there by myself. Besides, it's a bit far from here. I'd hate for you to walk that much for me."

"Oh.... Oh yeah! I need to go shopping too. I need to get a snack for tomorrow, so I'll go with you."

"Oh yeah, our principal did say to bring a snack. If you don't bring a snack on a trip, you won't be able to eat."

After yesterday's surprise announcement, our principal got on the speaker at noon and began speaking again. "I forgot something this morning! Bring a snack worth at least 300 yen! Anything less will be taken away! It's a requirement for the trip! This is your tasty principal!" That's our principal. Anytime is free time with him around.

"There's a good shop nearby. Let's go there."

"Ooh, a recommended shop huh? Let's go now!"

"Confirmed. Standby outside. Invoking weaved restrained unions."

"How can you say those difficult words so quickly!?"

Probably influenced by something. There's many influences that a chuunibyou patient would take their lines from. If they think it's cool, they'll use it. But I can't say I don't know where they're coming from. I too had my fair share of rip-offs when I was infected with this copycat disease. I don't want to talk to anyone about it though.

"Oh yeah, you were going to change clothes, didn't you?"

"Invoking weaved restrained unions!"

.....There it is again. I thought I had gotten used to her earlier outfit, but I somehow forgot about it due to Rikka's Santa outfit. Guess she had some reservations about going out with that one. It's almost summer, so that's natural.

And so I waited about five minutes, give or take.

"Sorry to keep you waiting."

And after Rikka changed clothes, she had on an outfit that was different than she had earlier, but it was still dark girl fashion. I don't know the first thing about gothic fashion, so I can't say if this is good or not, but all the frills are awfully cute. Must be a pain to wash though.

“What you have on is so amazing.” As I said that, Rikka’s face burst into her usual smile.

“Yuuta, I made this myself.”

“You made it yourself?! Really!?”

“Serious. On the final day I made the barrier jacket on top.”

“Are you trying to become a magical girl?!”

Evil Eyes would really subvert the magical girl genre.

But that’s another thing I didn’t know about her. I would have never guessed she had this talent with how clumsy she is. She’s able to make clothes that rival what you could purchase in stores, but she can’t cook.Alright! I’ll give her a private cooking lesson one day.

While Rikka was telling me about how she made her clothes, we walked for about ten minutes. We had reached the shop that Rikka had recommended. The outside looked like a normal fashion shop, but the name was...

“Persistent Beings Indefinite Melodies Fashion Shop”

Just the name tells you why Rikka likes this place. I too was charmed by how everything looked...But the debate over if I should retort or not retort went on in my head.

After walking in, I felt somewhat betrayed by the outside. It was definitely a place that would delight us. There were plenty of goods targeted towards boys, but only a portion. In short, those were goods were for anyone suffering with chuunibyou. There were also other accessories like gloves that hid the tips of your fingers in silver, goggles, and various items to pull at your soul. Every single one was an impulse buy.

“Yuuta, Yuuta! Come here, come here!” As I was looking over the inside of the shop, Rikka had found something that tickled her fancy and gleefully called out to me.

“Huh? Did you find something?”

“Look here! It’s an *Aggressive Aliens ☆ Secret Manual!*”

What Rikka was showing me was a newer publication of the book I read at her apartment. So it’s a continuing series huh....

“Ah, while that book looks interesting, did you find a snack? Isn’t that why we came here?”

“Snacks are over there.”

I looked where she was pointing and saw a cheap snacks corner set up. This place is like a general store!

“That’s quite the lineup they have there....!”

I see why she recommended this store. First let’s look at SugaO-san’s taro.

“Yuuta, I recommend this as well.”

What Rikka handed over was a KinaO stick. Though it might be strange, I liked to wear these.

I get the feeling we came here for a 300 yen snack. Taking this opportunity, Rikka went to read the magazines while I looked at that silver finger glove. At only 500 yen, it felt cheap. Though I want to buy it, I can’t think of a single way I’d use it. That’s the danger of impulse buying. But this is really an interesting shop. I had no idea there was somewhere like this nearby. After we leave today, I’ll definitely have to come back some other time.

“Now then, shouldn’t I be heading home?”

“Yuuta, I see a huge enemy from this side.”

“Huh?”

I looked and saw a huge dog pulling a small owner. They were coming this way. Looking more, that small owner is...my little sister. She’s holding that small weird plushie I bought. Yep, it’s her.

As soon as my sister noticed me, she yelled out,

“Ah, PAPA!!”

Rikka turned around and met her eyes. When she saw Rikka’s eye protruding out at her, my sister was really surprised. Grinning at me and the somewhat mamaish Rikka, she dashed towards us.

I know. Rikka, wait, no the whole world, would be thinking about the previous event. Why would a little girl yell “PAPA” at me? That smells like a crime! Our protagonist has a Lolita fetish! That’s libel or slander depending on the form! Stay quiet and I’ll tell you what happened!

As soon as she came near, I clasped my hand over her mouth. Of course that too seems like a cover-up. It was the fastest way I could think so she couldn’t say anything out loud. Pepapi (our cute dog) barked at me. Ungrateful mutt.

“Ugh, I won’t talk loudly. Papa, what are you doing here?”

“Call me Onii-chan! Were you and Pepapi on a stroll, Yumeha? It doesn’t matter. Yumeha, I’m Onii-chan. When we’re outside, you call me Onii-chan, okay?”

“Ahaha! You’ve grown! But we didn’t finish playing house yesterday!”



"I know that. We'll finish after dinner tonight. But for now, call me Onii-chan."

"Aye!"

She's energetic. Well, all of the other kids at her nursery are like that. It's common among 5 year olds. But disregarding that, how can I explain this to Rikka....

After watching the state of events, Rikka began heading towards Yumeha and myself. As she came closer, she stopped and went back a bit.

Oh, I gotta do that... I began to smooth things over with Rikka and my sister.

"Ah, well, this is my sister, Yumeha. As for why she called me Papa a while ago... well.. ah... she was just in the mood I guess."

I couldn't say anything about playing house. I was too embarrassed. But this unmindful five year old wasn't feeling the embarrassment I was.

"He's Papa. It's from when we played house yesterday, right?!"

"Damn it!"

I shut her mouth and whispered in her ear again.

"Call me Onii-chan and I'll buy you a snack. You'll get it after you're a good girl."

It felt like I was reciting some lines from a kidnapping, but oh well. I'll do anything to get over this incident.

"OOOH!"

With that yell, Yumeha began jumping around like a rabbit. She leapt out in front of us and began to talk to Rikka again.

“Umm. This is my Onii-chan, who always helps me out! Um... My Name Is Yumeha! I’m Fine Thank You Please Shhh! Umm, I play house alone! My oni-chan helps when he’s at home! It’s Neat!”

And that’s my little sister. Scary at times. She even used some of those English words I taught her while introducing herself! I’m not so sure about the last part though....

Rikka was staring at my sister without saying anything. I don’t know what she was thinking. As a compromise, she began playing with Yumeha’s frilly skirt and, for some reason, began brushing her face. Also for some reason, Yumeha was behaving for once.

“That’s a good girl. I am the user of the Devilish Truth Stare. My code name is Rikka, so you can call me that. Or you can address me as the Rikka the Strongest.”

“The whole concept of a code name is meaningless if you use your real name! How can you introduce yourself to my sister like that! In addition, your “Or you can address me” isn’t logical!”

And my outburst went unnoticed by the two of them. Rikka and Yumeha began creating a bond the two of them.

“Oh, Rikka! Rikka! That’s such a cool name!”

Going immediately without honorifics, aren’t you? Oh well, as long as she doesn’t mind.

“Incidentally, Yumeha, would you mind transferring that Kerberos to Yuuta? I’m from the demon world, so I do not have the best affinity with those creatures. If you would, I’d be grateful.”

She grabbed the hands of the five year old. I'm sure this is definitely interesting for Yumeha. So she'll hand him over to me? Oh yeah, didn't she call him an enemy when we came out of the store. That's cute.

"It's not a Kerberos, it's Pepapi! But only for Rikka. Here you go Onii-chan!"

And she gave me Pepapi's lead. As soon as she handed it over, she moved next to him and began brushing him gently like a doting parent.

"Hey hey, Rikka. Why do you have one of your eyes covered?"

"To notice such power?! I should have expected this from Yuuta's sister!"

Rare praise from her. But then I began to fear.

"I guess I'll show you the activation of the Devilish Truth Stare."

With an excited voice, Rikka began taking off her eyepatch. That golden eye shined for the second time today.

"OOOH! It's gold! It's gold!"

After being startled initially, Yumeha began pointing at Rikka's eye. Hey, you're not supposed to point at people like that!

"This is my inherited power: the Devilish Truth Stare."

"Is it real?"

"Yes. It has contracted Yuuta to myself."

Hey, don't tell my sister that. When she was 3, my sister was heavily influenced by me. I'm beginning to worry about her....

"Oh! That's amazing! Onii-chan's your contractee! Amazing! A-MAZE-IN!"

Yumeha's eyes were shining like Rikka's. She has promise as a vice commander. She didn't think anything was wrong with her story. This story is starting to get a bit too chuunibyouish. I need to stop it.

"Alright Yumeha. It's time for you to go home or else you won't get to eat...."

"EH? I want to play with Rikka!"

Yumeha began moving her arms around in the air in protest. She's already become attached to Rikka. That's fast. Quite fast, my sister. I admire you....

"Yumeha, I want to present you with a gift. It's a secret manual about aliens. Go home and study it. Afterwards, you can defeat aliens."

Rikka pulled out the book she bought earlier and handed it to Yumeha.

"What....? Is this alright? Have you read it already?"

"It's alright. You're Yuuta's sister, so here you go."

She said that in a sweet tone while looking at me.

"YAY! Thank you! A-ri-en-s! Have you defeated any aliens with your powers Rikka? Have you? Like going 'pow-pow'?"

"The Devilish Truth Stare is the strongest."

Yumeha's face was already ecstatic, but when Rikka said "strongest", she went into a trance-like state. Good job Rikka!

"Oh! I want to be Rikka too!"

And you weren't moved earlier huh, sis? Now you're a believer in Rikka.

Well, to be honest, I'm glad you two are on good terms.

"I understand. If you go to your home and undergo special training, then perhaps you too can awaken."

"YAY! It'll awaken!"

That's my house too you know. If you ever come over, I'll have to clean my room first. It's an ordinary room, but I need to seal away that dark history... Oh, what should I do?

While I was thinking about that, Rikka stood up and began saying her goodbyes to Yumeha.

"Byebye Rikka. See you when you get home Onii-chan."

"Oh, I see. I'll try not to keep you waiting."

I handed over the lead to Yumeha and re-joined Rikka.

"Sorry about that. You kinda served as a rented sibling. Thanks. You got along well with my little sister."

Today I felt grateful for Rikka to take over and play like siblings with my sister.

"No problem. I also enjoyed it."

As she said that, she smiled, but then she murmured something in a low voice,

"....Playing house with Yuuta?"

"Huh?! Ah, ah, umm, look, umm, it's not like I enjoy playing house. It's just that..oh, my father power is just too much sometimes. Or something like that?"

There was a lot of chaos in that sentence. I'm starting to wonder if I think talking like a tsundere is cool after all. Father power? I can't think of

anything in this world that requires it, but looks like I'll have to watch it from here on. Or else I'll be embarrassed to death.... Playing house at how old....

"It's alright. I'll keep your secret. Would you like to do it together? Hmm, I'll be the dark fallen angel."

"Sorry, but I don't think there's a role like that in playing house! Besides, have some restraint!"

Wait, isn't playing house another make-believe concept?

"Oh, that's disappointing. But it looks like Yuuta is really affectionate towards his sister."

Rikka's face was disappointed. She wasn't serious, was she? Maybe there is a spot for a dark fallen angel.

"Well, no matter how old she is, she's always trouble when I watch over her. Tha-that doesn't mean I'm affectionate towards her! It's difficult these days when people say something like that. It's quite a handful."

"Then good friends."

Oh... I'm so embarrassed I can't confirm or deny her on that. It's not like I can deny that, so I guess we'll have to be friends.

We were a bit silent, but I was able to hear Rikka say something in a low voice,

"....I'm a bit....envious....."

"Huh?"

"Don't worry about it. Isn't it time for you to be returning home?"

"That just makes me worry, but yeah, it's time for me to go. I definitely imposed on your company today. Come over to my house and play with Yumeha sometime."

She nodded with a smile on her lonely face.

"Then, see you tomorrow. Bye bye!"

As soon as she said her partings in an uneasy voice, Rikka turned around and walked back to her apartment.

"Oh, OH! See you tomorrow!"

Though I wasn't thinking straight, I had to say my goodbyes as she left. I get the feeling her mood changed during these events. What's going on....?

"Onii-chan! Onii-chan! Look! Look!"

As I changed my vision from Rikka's back to my sister, my worries stopped immediately. So too did my breathing. Yumeha had found a matching eyepatch and put it over the same eye. Before I knew it, her right eye was sealed.

"Alright! Then, Serious Another Type start! Hey, hey! Are my eyes gold? Are they?"

Oh boy....how am I going to answer this one? I can't help but roar at Rikka for what she did. I don't want to make my sister mad, but I don't have many options. I'll start with something evasive and then gently let her down.

"It's... not quite there yet. Looks like you need more training. They're both still black. Why don't you study what Rikka gave you..."

"I have more to do before it awakens! Yeah! I'll study like Rikka did and destroy aliens!"

While the final portion was cute, I don't think it overtook some of what I did when I was her age.

Back to the real problem at hand...

"Yumeha, mom will want to know what you're wearing... Why don't you take it off when you get home."

"Nopes! It's sealed! Like Rikka said, if it's not sealed, Another Type won't awaken!"

.....So that's how it is.

After hearing her make up something like that without any mistakes, I couldn't say anything. I breathed a deep sigh and started to think of excuses as Yumeha and I went home.

Chapter 8 : Class Trip!

We had the kind of weather you wanted on any trip on the Monday our class went on ours: nice and sunny. I looked around and saw a variety of colors from my classmates who were split into their social groups. Since today was a trip, no one was wearing their uniform. It's worth going on one of these just so you can see your classmates in a new light.

As for me, my attention was on Kannagi-san. You'd almost have to take notice of the girl who got second place in our class rankings. She looks awfully cute and somewhat sensual today.

But there was another person I kept an eye on: Rikka. Rikka was dressed in her dark girl attire, like yesterday. Since we're nearing summer, I'm sure that has to be hot to wear. As for accessories, you shouldn't have to ask: she comes equipped with eyepatch and bandages already assembled.

"Ooh, our girls out of their uniforms are surely a sight for sore eyes."

The guy who thought the same as me is giving off that "I love girls!" aura. Isshiki was breathing heavily as if he couldn't control himself. He walked next to me and began speaking.

"The class trip is one of the events where love is born. The girls in normal clothing can't help but captivate a guy when he sees their innocent smiles. Yep, without this event, love can't form in a class."

"You really love girls, don't you? Why don't you sit beside some of them on the bus? I can get someone to sit next to me."

Today we were taking a bus. There were many classes that wanted to use one, but Nana-chan won the right to use one via lottery. Thus our travel was already taken care of. Isshiki and I were together in the middle of the bus. We

were free to sit wherever we wanted, but as you can guess, friends wanted to sit next to each other and chat on the way.

Our conversation went on as we gathered at the platform. “Oh, that’s a difficult question: do I go with friendship or do I go for love?”

“AIIII right! We’re about to leave, so listen up! Does anyone get motion sickness easily? If you do, we have some seats near the front of the bus, alright? Anyone?”

Nana-chan in non-teacher attire looks just like one of the students. Just looking at her, you wouldn’t guess she’s in charge, but she turned back into a teacher when we all met. I guess we have a rule for those with motion sickness to go to the front of the bus. If someone gets sick easily, you don’t want them on top of one of the tires. Thus if you move them to the front, they won’t move around as much. Oh well, doesn’t apply to me.

We were about to head onto the bus after Nana-chan’s announcement since no one raised their hand, but then one person lifted theirs.

“Alright, anyone else besides Takanashi-san? Alright, then you’ll move to the front of the bus!”

It was Rikka. I was a bit surprised she gets intoxicated easily. Guess that’s the weak point of the Devilish Truth Stare. She looked anxious as she turned her head and looked at me.

Huh? What? You want me to come too? After I pointed at myself, Rikka nodded her head ‘yes.’ Since she doesn’t have telepathy, I suppose this is just me being able to read her after spending time together. According to her, it’s probably the contracting forces from the Devilish Truth Stare.

Oh well, I shrugged my shoulders and raised my hand. Rikka’s face lit up. Guess that was the right decision.

“Oh, you get sick too Togashi-kun? Well, guess you’ll be sitting up front too! Anyone else? Any seats left over? Anyone want to sit near me?”

Everyone was already ignoring Nana-chan at this time. Isshiki grabbed my shoulder. Painfully. His face is scary...and close.

“O, Oi! You chose love over friendship?! Are you trying to make some romantic memories?”

“No, I’m not trying to create anything like that, it’s just me worrying about Rikka. Sorry Isshiki. I’m not trying to have love bloom in front of you! It’s just how this worked out!”

“Idiot! Don’t you dare try to re-create our seating arrangement! This is our long-awaited freedom trip and you’re about to leave me hanging in the middle of the bus. Or wait... you probably had this planned beforehand to sit with her! Isn’t that right?!”

“Well, that wouldn’t be a bad idea...”

In the end, it was just Rikka and myself in the front as our class headed towards “Cycle SportsCenter.”

“Ohh...I want to die....”

Although we had just barely left, Rikka was already sick. As soon as the bus had started, she lost all color in her face. That’s fast, really fast. Just the odor of the bus started her motion sickness. There was a time when I was young and got sick, so I knew what she was feeling, but this was faster than anything I experienced.

“Are you alright?”

"I'm all right.....maybe....." Rikka was unusually timid. When she looked towards me, her face didn't look normal. Her body didn't feel right either. This could be dangerous.....

"Did you take any medicine? Maybe the teacher has some that you could take?"

"....The Devilish Truth Stare is the best.... That would decrease the effectiveness of my powers....."

I know she wasn't feeling alright since I couldn't understand what she was trying to say. That doesn't mean you have to tough it out....Poor thing. I patted her back to tell her to hang in there.

Of course, the rest of the bus wasn't paying any attention to Rikka. There was a huge karaoke event in the middle. Though it looked fun and I was a bit envious of them, I was next to Rikka. I couldn't let her see that side of me.



So after about one hour of trouble (for Rikka) we had finally arrived at our destination, "Cycle SportsCenter." We had told them beforehand that our class would be attending, so everyone was able to head in without any difficulties. After walking inside, we reached a plaza where you could see all the attractions around. There were various rides, places to ride bikes, and even some roller coasters. It was just like a small amusement park. I don't know where to go first.

It was a weekday, so the atmosphere was really laid-back. Somewhat miraculously, there weren't many people around. If you loved bikes, this was a great day to come here.

Seems like there were a lot of people who didn't know what to expect since it would be their first time here. I heard things like "This is amazing!" or "That looks fun!" all around me. Well, it was my first time here too, so of course everything looks fun but...Rikka, who was beside me, still hadn't regained color in her face yet.

"Alright then, you have until noon to do whatever you wish! At noon, we'll meet back here and have a barbecue! Remember, meet back at this plaza!"

As Nana-chan was yelling about, everyone started to scatter. Isshiki too came over to see me.

"She doesn't look that good.... Well, I trust you'll nurse her back to good health man. Call me if you want to join us. Later!" And he went off with some other guys.

After that, Nana-chan came over to see Rikka. "Are you alright?" She began stroking Rikka's body. "Well, usually the teacher looks after her in situations like this, but is it alright if I leave her with you, Togashi-kun? You've helped her before, so you shouldn't mind doing this as well...."

"Ah, that's alright. She's a strong girl, so I think she'll quickly bounce back."

"Sorry about this. Well, I'll see you later!" And while saying that, she got on an unstylish bike and left the plaza.

I went to sit on a bench next to the still recovering Rikka.

"You alright? Well, not that I know you're not alright, but just in case..."

"I should've expected this reaction from my contractee.... But listen: You should tame that dragon vehicle over there so we can conquer the world...."

Looks like she's starting to feel better. She's starting to say some interesting things again.

"Well, that sounds fun but... do you want something to drink? Do you want me to get you anything?"

"Yuuta's life essence is alright...."

"Now you're starting to act like a vampire...."

That response was probably due to the sun bearing down on us with no relief. No shadows, no escape. Just evaporation.

"Well, is barley tea alright? I made some and brought it."

"...Well, if that's all you have, it's alright."

I pulled my PET bottle out of my bag and handed my homemade tea over to Rikka.

"This is Yuuta's life essence...."

"You don't really want to drink that, do you....?"

"I've heard drinking blood is the fastest way to rehabilitate you."

"So that's why you want to drink my blood! Let me say this before anything, I'm 100% human!"

"Yuuta is the Dark Flame Master. He's the Devil King who sucks young people's blood."

What an excess back-story I have. She can't get a grasp on my character. Besides, I'm a guy. There's no time that I would try to suck another guy's blood.

"Listen, if you drink this, you'll recover faster. We came out here on a trip; don't you want to have some fun?"

“Yuuta, I didn’t travel here for that purpose. This is a practical location. In addition, we shall tame that dragon and make it ours. Yes, we are strong at this location.”

“Don’t count me in your plans like that! Why can’t we just play normally? I don’t know much about this place, but it looks like there’s some fun bikes around here.”

“Aren’t you going to tame that dragon?”

“Huh? That bike over there? You want me to get on it?”

“Go ahead and tame it! That’s our Yuuta, Dark Flame Master, Devil King, and sucker of young guys’ and girls’ blood!”

That’s not true! Not only is she trying to assign that to me, she keeps adding things to make that uselessly long name. It’s amazing, but horrible to try to write in a sentence.

Hmm, looks like she wants me to “tame that dragon bike”. Perhaps she doesn’t want to get on it? I’ve already seen one of her weaknesses today, so it’s already been an interesting day.

“Rikka, don’t you want to get on the bike?”

Holding back my laughter, Rikka had finally realized how she left herself open and began waving her hand to smooth things over.

“It’s...different! To tame a dragon, a specific power is needed. With Yuuta as my contractee due to the Devilish Truth Stare, I cannot tame that beast in my current condition. It is possible that I could tame that beast at any other time.”

Yep, she's healthy again. Her face was bright red, but she was the usual Rikka. Since we've been able to have this idiotic exchange from the time she's been off the bus, I know she's gotten better.

"Yes, yes. I'll teach you how to ride then. Since they have some weird bikes here, I wonder if they have a ladies bike."

"Instruct me how to tame a dragon! Let's go now!"

"Yes, yes."

And so we set out to find a normal bike in the park.

"They only have strange bikes here...man!"

"That cool dragon should have sufficed. How about that one? Is it alright?"

What Rikka was pointing at was a two-person bike. I doubt that we could get on it, but it'd be dangerous to ride that with the second person not knowing how.

"Nah, we need to find the ultimate ladies bike."

"Ultimate ladies' bike. Roger."

So thoughtless! But I see. If I mention that we're looking for the ultimate, perhaps this might work out for the best.

"Yuuta! Over there! That has the scent of the demon world!"

"Huh?"

What was making her so excited was something called the "Bike Mansion." Letters that seemed to be cursed hung underneath the sign. It was quite the shady place. One look and you'd think it was a haunted house.

“Bike Mansion” huh? From that name, you’d think it might be a place where you looked at bikes throughout history, but this really looked like a haunted house. I heard a scream come out. Must have been from someone in our class who entered it earlier.

“Let’s go! I want to go inside!”

“Eh... well, are you sure you want to go in that one? From the name, it looks like it might be a museum where you look at bikes throughout history. That doesn’t sound interesting, so let’s skip it.”

“GO!”

She’s too much. Really, I don’t want to go in there.

“Yuuta, could it be that you’re scared?”

“N-n, That’s not it! What are you talking about? How could a museum about bikes be scary? I just have no interest in that kind of thing, so I don’t want to go in there!”

“You’re just a girl in mens clothing.”

She hit my big weak spot. Damn it, I don’t really like to be called that!

“Ah, let’s go! Scary? HAHA! What kind of museum is scary? Let’s see the scary history of bikes! What kind of bikey haunted house is this?! I’ll burn you with my flames of darkness!”

The Devilish Truth Stare is starting to get to me. Agh, be still my scared, chuunibyou soul.... If I don’t pay attention, Rikka will really draw out my old self.

I gathered my courage to go inside this haunted house otherwise named a bike mansion. I couldn’t see inside; it was pitch black. My heart began to beat rapidly as a roar sounded in that dark room. I was so worried I could feel my heart go “da-dum, da-dum” without feeling for a pulse.

....I'm really sorry! It's scary! I was about to apologize to Rikka when I remembered her comment.

"Are you alright, Yuuta?"

"Huh? What's wrong?"

"You're tugging on my clothing."

.....Without thinking, I had tugged on Rikka's cuff. Ah, that isn't cool!

"Ah, sorry. I couldn't see before, so I grabbed it...."

That's such a bad excuse, but I really wasn't thinking straight.

"Unlawful dumping of bikes is a crime!!!! Parking your bikes on public roads without permission is annoying!!!!"

"AHhhhhhhhhh!"

A hair-raising voice came through the speaker. It was like a curse going around the room! But those phrases were a bit different than the usual fare for a haunted house; they were so realistic. Stop it! I won't park my bike without permission ever again!

And after that, we saw the bikey haunted house emphasize the haunted aspect. Unhappy episodes about bikes kept going through the speakers. First was the jingle of a bike's bell ringing, followed by the sound of an exercise bike, and then there was a policeman on a bike telling someone to stop. I felt like I had just survived a disaster once this mysterious attraction was over.

Of course, my partner, Rikka, had the biggest happy smile on her face.

"I want to go in again!"

She was really happy, but looking at me in my half-groggy state, she took pity and added "Maybe another time." I was glad to hear that.

“Alright, well, if we want to fit in special bike training, we need to find one. Before that, let’s rest a bit....”

“Roger.”

I had completely exhausted all strength I had prior to going into that “Bike Mansion.” Along the way in, I saw a place where we could get on ladies’ bikes. Good, we’ll head there after we rest.

I found a vending machine and bought tea and apple juice. I can’t say that I’m alright, but my tea should help exorcise these demons.

But when I arrived at the bench we were at a while ago, Rikka was nowhere to be found. Thinking she was a bit energetic and wanted to hide, I looked around the bench. I couldn’t find her. Hmm, where did she go? Did she head into the “Bike Manson” again?

I didn’t have the strength to search again, so I resigned myself to sitting on the bench. As I sat on the bench, I found a piece of paper.

“I went off to the demon world. I’ll be back shortly.”

I had seen that handwriting many times in our study group. It was Rikka’s. Going to the demon world? Seems like she went back to that haunted house again. I waited on the bench while drinking my tea.

After twenty minutes had passed and there was no sign of her coming back, I began to worry.

“That’s strange... Maybe I should call her cell phone...”

I pulled out my cell phone and looked up her information. I gave her a call, but I got a “could not reach” message. I immediately tried again, but the same message rang in my ear.

“My cell phone has reception, but I wonder if Rikka’s does....”

The third call had the same results. I was starting to get really really worried now.

Going to the demon world....where is that? Damn it, where did she go....

Since I couldn’t reach her, I decided to call Isshiki. On the fifth ring he picked up.

“Oh, hey man. It’s me. Sorry to bother you, but have you seen Rikka? She was here just a while ago...”

“Takanashi-san went astray? Well, we haven’t seen her once since we left. Right guys?”

I could hear the guys around him confirm that.

“Looks like we haven’t seen her.”

“Oh, sorry to bother you. If you see her, please call me. Thanks!”

“Ah, got it! Will do.”

As I hung up, I tried to gather myself. I was about to lose it. Ah, where did she go when she left this note?

I was wandering around the bench thinking to myself when I heard a voice speak to me.

“What’s wrong? You’re walking around strangely.”

The person who saw me walking around was Nibutani.

“Ah, Nibutani. Why are you by yourself?”

“My friends went on the roller coaster, so I thought I’d take pictures. Look over there.”

“That’s not a typical Japanese way of phrasing that, but I get what you’re saying.”

As I gave my rebuttal, I looked where she was pointing. Sure enough, the coaster was starting to climb to its high point.

“I thought I could get some good pictures from here. I’m not comfortable riding roller coasters, so I became the cameraman instead. But why are you alone? I thought you were with Takanashi-san.”

“Well, Rikka left a little while ago and hasn’t returned...”

“Hasn’t returned?”

Nibutani had a puzzled look. I tried to think of a better way of explaining the situation to her, but I couldn’t think of one. I don’t want to think about it, but, but, it would be grave if she were kidnapped... I couldn’t help but feel uneasy about the whole situation.

“She left behind this letter so I wasn’t worried at first but.... I can’t help being concerned.... So I was thinking about where she could have gone....”

I showed Rikka’s note to Nibutani.

“Seriously.... This has got to be... chuunibyou....”

Her face changed drastically to hate. Of course she’d react like that.... While I was thinking I screwed up by showing Rikka’s note to her, Nibutani pulled out her cell phone and began talking in a different tone.

“Oh, Chinatsu? Sorry. Something came up that I’ve got to take care of, so I can’t take any pictures. Yes, it’s just a little errand. I’ll be sure to cook some barbecue with you later. Yeah. Bye!”

“Huh? What are you doing?”

“What do you mean? Shouldn’t I help search?”

I thought a miracle had occurred. I would search for Rikka with Nibutani? Sorry, I would search for the chuunibyou patient with the person who hates them? It sounds foolish.

“You know, I am the class rep. Even if she never recovers, I won’t stop searching for her. That’d be foolish for me to even think about doing. You understand? Got it?”

“Ah, Ahhh” Guess I had a strange look. Really, anyone who had heard that conversation would be as lost as I was.

“You know, what you said earlier is still on my mind. Why do you hate chuunibyou Nibutani?”

“I can’t answer that now.”

Of course. Well, she could just hate them. It wasn’t nice for me to ask something strange when she agreed to help search for Rikka.

“Sorry. You seem to have a strange hatred for them, so it was just on my mind. Thank you for helping. Now let’s go search!”

After I said that, Nibutani appeared to be in thought. While playing with her bangs, she replied,

“You know, let me ask you the opposite question. Why do you want to protect chuunibyou patients? Didn’t you want to die in agony?”

As she was thinking, she added her own question to answer mine. Protect, huh? Well, I don’t think it’s amusing itself, but somehow I feel I want to protect Rikka. But I have no intentions to protect chuunibyou itself. It’s a really difficult concept to explain.

"I have no plans to protect chuunibyou the disease, but that doesn't mean I hate it. Sure I want the past me to die sometimes, but I also want to apologize to the people I inconvenienced."

"Well, why do you spoil Takanashi-san then? You said to me previously that she should be cured quickly. She's just running away from the real world into a delusional world. While I don't know why or when she escaped, it's got to be something like that. There's no meaning to what she's doing."

There's no meaning. Those words stuck deep into my head.

"While I don't think I pamper Rikka.....maybe she does use it as an escape. From tomorrow onward, I'll be serious towards her. I don't know why she got into chuunibyou, but I do know she thinks she gained abilities. Well, maybe she thinks she recognized them later?"

"...hmm"

Nibutani sounded disinterested as she heard me talk.

"...Is that so? You're something if you think about chuunibyou like that. For me, thinking that way would be impossible. Abilities and such, I couldn't do it... Ah...that Darkness T-shirt is quite interesting on the other hand."

"No it's not! How did we move to a subject that wants to kill me via embarrassment?! And then, and then, how do you know about it?!"

"It shows through your overshirt. You've been found out every time you wear it."

Seriously... She's got to be lying... What a let down.

"Look, you know it too. Chuunibyou should be cured, right? As soon as someone has those kinds of thoughts, they should be cured quickly so that they

won't happen again. They won't have a lot of dark history, but they'll have plenty of light history."

"Light history.... I knew it, after saying something like that, could you also have had chuunibyou?"

"Huh?"

Crap. I got out of hand about 5 seconds ago. That response felt like I was shot with an MK5. The usual Nibutani-san, our class rep, our class king that I adore is no longer there. I could feel her sadistic side come out.

"Oh, you really want to die painfully, don't you? Let's see how painful of a death I could make it for you, alright? Now then, what page shall I read from your Dark Notebook? How about from chapter 5 where you wrote your dark poem? It was at the height of your evil eye form of chuunibyou, wasn't it?"

"Damn it... stop it... Class King... I'm sorry....!"

I apologized to the deceased class rep who fell into hell and became a dark demon. She's really clever at planning which stories to talk about. What could I say in this situation.....

"Class King huh?" Nibutani repeated the nickname we gave her with a sigh. It was clear she was astonished by that name. She appeared to give up and turned towards me.

"....I'm only saying this for your sake. Don't misunderstand me. I did not have anything like an Evil Eye."

So I noticed. But I didn't have an Evil Eye even though I suffered through chuunibyou too.

"Eh, is that so? So you were also ill at one time..." That's surprising. Not that she fell ill, but that I would notice something like that.

“Honestly, I guess my joke fell flat from how you replied.”

“What era are you from?!”

Fell flat... incidentally, that term refers to any reaction. Fall. Flat. Just how old is that term. I need an explanation.

While cursing Nibutani in my head, she continued, “That reply grinds my gears!”

And again she shifts us in time. I don’t know why, but she continued onward being serious.

“At that time I didn’t give any effort. I didn’t care about friends, clubs, and or other various things. The only one who understood me was Shichimiya. But now it’s different. Now I see you spoiling Takanashi-san when she doesn’t give any effort. Honestly, I think she’s a coward. Well, I think you could compare her to how I used to be, but it’s a bit different. Regardless, we definitely need to search for her. It may be a bother for me, but I won’t give up on her.”

Nibutani said she didn’t give any effort. I’m not sure what she meant by that phrase, but I can relate to the time when I fell ill. So this is why she hates chuunibyou patients. It’s how she thinks they feel.

I continued our chuunibyou discussion emphasizing that our way of thinking isn’t that different. “Is that so? Incidentally, I too didn’t give much effort back then. That’s not to say I’m using a lot of effort to get rid of my dark history though.”

You know, anyone else could have found me, but I’m glad that it was Nibutani, she who shared a similar past. That part, I’m sure of. She’s a sympathizer like I am. But I’m not sure she’ll sympathize with anyone who’s got chuunibyou now though.

“Huh? Oh, apart from that, what should we do? Don’t you want everyone to help?”

“Huh? How would that work?”

“If I just talk to Chinatsu about it, everyone would know about the situation quickly? How about it?”

I was a bit hesitant. “I want everyone’s help, but... I don’t want to be a bother to our class.”

“.....Weren’t you already one with those rumors? Well, you know, Takanashi-san is our classmate. If we find her soon, everything will be alright. You look depressed; that’s not usual for you. Well, then I’ll get everyone to search for her. We’ll keep it a secret from Ms. Tsukumo.”

Nibutani was the best Class King, as well as class rep, ever. This must really take a lot of effort for her. Her words from a while ago flickered in my head.

“Thank you. Well, I’m relying on you. If you find her, please let me know!”

After saying that, I dashed towards where those ladies bikes were earlier. I heard Nibutani from behind.

“Ah, alright. Before I forget, that ‘Class King’ was a bit of a surprise. I really liked it!”

After parting with Nibutani, I quickly went to a bike storage rack and got a simple bike (the strongest ladies bike) and began searching around the park. Five minutes later I noticed something.

“Ah, I don’t know Nibutani’s phone info....”

I had already covered a lot of distance. If I find Rikka, I hope it's near someone so they can pass the message. If one of them finds her, they'll have to contact me via Isshiki.

"Ignoring that, where is she....?"

I went around the attractions looking for her a bit recklessly, but I couldn't see her. En route, Nibutani called me. Everyone was notified and asked; no one had reported seeing her.

It felt like hours since I began searching. I kept pedaling, but it felt like this road would never end.

"She couldn't have gone towards the mountain, could she?"

There was a mountain that neighbored Cycle SportsCenter. I couldn't rule out the chance that she meant there when she said she was going to the demon world. But there was no where to leave from. I noticed a lot of "No Entry" signs.

"I feel like this is a clue."

I wasn't confident that she went up the mountain. It's so wide and spare; it would be difficult to search through. If I tried to search there, it could be hours before I find her or hear anything. I was starting to run out of gas and yet I kept on pedaling.

Our meeting time was shortly approaching. The situation's dangerous as is, so I'll keep searching a little more. My impatience was really starting to grow.

But that mountain looked very suspicious. Since everyone is spread throughout the park, it's the one place that no one reported from. No one had looked there. Everyone had looked throughout the park without finding any traces of Rikka, so I headed towards the mountain a bit unsteady.

On my way I found a clue. Something where if you saw it, you'd instantly associate it with Rikka. She must have dropped it en route.

It was a white eyepatch.

I picked it up and confirmed that it was Rikka's. Across from it was a "No Entry" sign. There were tracks heading towards the mountain.

"Did she leave here?"

I didn't know why anyone would leave, but I had a hunch it was Rikka who left through here leaving her eyepatch behind. I stuffed her eyepatch in my pocket and began heading up the mountain to search for her.

"When she said demon world, is this the demon world she meant.....?"

I could easily tell no one had been up the mountain in a while. The tracks were horrible. So much plant growth and dim lighting. It'll be difficult to search here.

I don't know why I was so worried, but my body just moved on its own. She's got to be here somehow. Anxious. Impatient. Those and other emotions were going through my head and I couldn't think clearly. Regardless, I had a feeling I should find Rikka soon or else.

"RIKKA!"

I yelled loudly, but there was no response. I kept yelling loudly as I searched for her. I walked a little bit further when I found a bright spot.

There was Rikka looking up at a tree.

Thank god... She came here....

"Rikka! What are you doing?!"

"Yuuta.....?"

Rikka looked at me languishly. Her eyes were a bit red and looked inflamed. It must have come from scrubbing her gold eye while it was sparkling.

“You really worried me! What are you doing here?”

“.....”

She didn’t respond to my words. She still looked a bit languished as she looked down.

“What’s wrong? Was there something here?”

Blank eyes looked at me as Rikka spoke in a tiny voice.

“.....I was supposed to go to the demon world.”

“Huh.... What do you mean? Don’t you usually head there?”

She’s said a few times that she was heading to the demon world. Usually it’s when we’re studying and she wants to escape. Not so today. Today, I got the sense she really wanted to head to the demon world.

“Usually, I don’t go there... A while ago my father was in this world, thus I wanted to be here. But now, my father is in the demon world.”

“Your father?”

She had told me yesterday about her living situation and how she lived by herself. When she first told me about her relationship with her folks I really hated her parents, but I never could have imagined it was like this. I got the impression that Rikka really loved her father.

“My father also had powers like I do.”

“.....Is that true?”

“My father.... isn’t here. He said he went to the demon world, but never returned. He said he would definitely come back.”

“.....”

I couldn't think of anything to say. Well, I couldn't say anything. I wanted to hear about these things Rikka had hidden. I want to know more about her.

“That's why I took over for him and inherited his powers. With the Devilish Truth Stare, someday I will go to the demon world.”

Rikka continued in an uninterested voice. As she spoke, I remembered something Isshiki had told me about the time when she was in middle school. Suddenly her character changed overnight.

“But I still can't go there. Regardless, I really really want to see my father. I thought I could do it, but maybe it's impossible after all.”

I don't know how much of this is truth, but if it's true, then everything makes sense.

“I see. That's really disappointing, but I'm sure you'll be able to go one day.”

I don't know the details of what happened or why that gave her chuunibyou, but I can't deny her desire to go to the demon world. I too would think like that if I were her. If that person isn't here, then they must be in the demon world.

“.... When I was in middle school, I was overlooked. I wasn't close to anyone in this world, wouldn't you agree? That's how I know what you feel when you say you want to go to the demon world.”

“What do you mean?”

“Of course, I wasn't talented at using my powers either. Ha ha! It was impossible for me to use my flames of darkness.”

Everyone has events that happen to them. Those events are the reason some people get involved in chuunibyou. It enchants them, or it protects them, or so on.

“.....My contractee thinks I can go to the demon world....I trained my Devilish Truth Stare power to be the best I could do, but I still haven’t found him. It’s been months and months. A very long time since I saw him.... But now Yuuta is here. That’s why I wanted to meet my father today.”

“You give too much credit to your contractee.”

That’s why she’s now a chuunibyou patient, isn’t it? That’s why these powers have meaning to her.

It’s really the opposite of what Nibutani said. For example, if a person becomes a chuunibyou patient to make themselves escape from reality, I don’t think it’s bad as long as they recognize it. Thus chuunibyou has some meaning for that person. It’s essential for their being.

I hadn’t thought about this until now, but it’s true. Each person develops chuunibyou for their own reason and thus it means different things for each person. Since everyone is different, then you have to consider their reasons in any discussion about cures or even the disease itself. Since their significances are different, then so are their meanings. For me, it was enchantment.

In Rikka’s case, I don’t know now.

“Yuuta is a good contractee.”

As Rikka said that, her usual cute smile blossomed on her face.

“Hey, why did you choose me as your contractee?”

Something from yesterday burst in me and I had to ask.

Her reply, “.....It’s a secret.”

That damn smile.

"It's alright! Why did you choose me? Come on, you can tell me!"

"It's a secret."

Once she gets in this mode, she won't say anything. Stubborn girl. Oh well, it's alright. I shrugged my shoulders and grabbed her hand.

"Did you know that everyone's searching for you since you went off randomly? Your departure was a bother to everyone. If we don't get back quickly, they'll be mad."

I looked at my wristwatch. It was half past twelve. Crap...

"Look at the time, let's go!"

"Yeah."

We quickly headed down the mountain as is. We went through the exit point and got on the bike I had left. Alright, it'll take what, ten minutes by bike?

At that time my phone buzzed. It was an unfamiliar number.

"Hello."

"Hey you! Why'd you turn off your phone?!"

From the first word, her voice rang in my ear. Of course that voice is probably...

"Ah, it's Nibutani. Sorry, I didn't know that I would be in a place where I couldn't get reception. I didn't turn off my phone...."

"Where were you that you couldn't get any reception? Did you find Takanashi-san?!"

"After a number of things, I guess you could say I did. I found her. Sorry, we'll be there shortly."

"Everyone else is already here. Nana-chan found out shortly afterwards and got angry!"

And with two clicks I heard our conversation end.

....So they're angry. Of course they would be, but they'll be angry at both of us.

"Rikka, it sounds like everyone's a bit angry. Let's ride double so they won't focus their anger at just you."

"Ooh....they're angry...."

"Then they'll be angry at me too."

"Ooh, understood."

I straddled the bike and Rikka got on behind me. She fit just right in the luggage carrier behind my seat.

"Oh yeah. Rikka, here's your eyepatch. Did you lose it?"

"You had it Yuuta?"

"You must have lost it around here. Why did you take it off?"

"I removed it in order to activate my powers. It must have fallen out of my pocket."

After getting back her eyepatch, Rikka put it on. For some reason, it feels like she was destined to wear it. It's like a guiding light to Rikka's soul. While I was waxing poetically, what happened to her father came to mind. If he doesn't exist, then I couldn't find him.....That's just a delusion! Though my poetry skills are in decent form today, I'm not that pleased.

“Alright, ready to go?”

“Incidentally Yuuta, what is the name of your dragon underling?”

“If you’ve got nothing to say, let’s go! Wait, name? Why would I do that?!”

“If you tame something, you have to name it. Then I shall name it. Ah, it shall be ‘Anteros’⁷.”

“I don’t know what you mean by that! Did you just pick it because it sounded cool?!”

I remember seeing that name before, but what did it mean? Ah, no good, I can’t remember with this pressure.

“I have embarked. We shall depart now!”

With her hands around my stomach, I could feel the warmth from Rikka’s body. A bit embarrassing, but I’ll have to hide my feelings. We’re off!

Ten minutes shouldn’t make any difference now. If anyone gets mad, we’ll just apologize.

Ten minutes later, we got off the bike just before arriving to the plaza. Courage? It was wisdom and smart judgment I say. Rikka had returned to looking discomforted.

Naturally, everyone was gathered at the plaza. The moment they saw us, Nana-chan recklessly ran over to us “Hey! Where were you two?! We were very worried about both of you!”

⁷ Rikka names the bike Bakkahyoushin, or “Matchmaker/Cupid” in the original text. Simply using that and pretending Yuuta doesn’t recognize that phrase wouldn’t make sense. Thus I picked something that works as well.

“So-sorry.....Rikka ended up being like a lost child.” Beforehand we developed a countermeasure to deal with Nana-chan. Rikka had decided that she would be a lost child while on the bike.

“A lost child....”

“We couldn’t get in touch with you Ms. Tsukumo! You know that, right?”

“Yes.....”

Everyone started to look dejected at us. Although we got in touch with everyone in the class, we should have gotten in touch with Nana-chan too. Everyone was reflecting on what we should have done, but didn’t do. Rikka was also in reflection as well.

“Alright, it’s a little bit later than scheduled, but let’s start preparing the barbeque! Those in charge come over here and everyone else will wait for instructions!”

The people in charge dashed over to Nana-chan. What a good teacher she is. She’s always composed with a smile until the very end. Such a nice teacher. Granted, she’s our homeroom teacher but she does have a bit of superiority complex.

“Yuuta, would they be angry if you had said I was the ‘Midnight Lost Child’ instead?”

“Why would you think of that now?! Of course they would!”

Have some delicacy. You were a lost child for a noon appointment. I thought it was clever..... Oh well, but it looked like Nana-chan didn’t have any sympathy for us.

“I’m glad I didn’t have to talk.”

Good grief. I'm not sure if she was actually reflecting on what happened or not. Oh well, she'd say these kind of things if she was reflecting too.

While we had this back-and-forth, our classmates came over to see us. The first person to speak had to be Nibutani, of course.

"Hey Takanashi-san! Just where did you go? The demon world? Don't you think that's a bit too chuunibyou even for you?"

".....I did not go to the demon world."

"Well, I don't know whatever you ended going to, but it doesn't matter. Did you mean to cause trouble for everyone?"

".....That is....."

Rikka kept silent after that. She probably doesn't know a good way to apologize.

"Huh? You're going to end it like that?"

".....My father...."

"Your father?"

".....Nibutani. I'll apologize for her. She was tired from the trip over here and wandered off by herself. I was the one who led her around. Sorry. I apologize for bothering everyone."

I bowed my head towards everyone. Everyone else accepted that.

"You be silent! I was talking to Takanashi-san."

....Rikka was looking down and remaining silent. But being silent here might not be a good thing.

Rikka took a deep breath and then yelled out.

“Everything was my fault. I won’t do that again! I won’t inconvenience everyone! I promise!”

That was a very Rikka style of apologizing. The plaza went silent. One girl broke that silence.

It was Kannagi-san. “I really wanted to go to the demon world today too! How about going sometime with me Takanashi-san?”

.....The other person who voted for that was Kannagi-san?! Everyone in the class was surprised. After being silent, everyone in the class started to laugh.

And then another person chimed in. It was Yukimaru-san .

“This detective game was fun. I don’t care what happened!”

And then one-by-one everyone rang in,

“I don’t mind either! I had fun searching!”

“That’s so Rikka-chan!”

“I wanted to be the one who found Takanashi-san! AGH!!!!!”

saying things like that. Really, we have such a sweet class. Seeing their reactions to what had happened, it was almost enough to bring tears to my eyes.

“Hmm, well I don’t accept her apology! Chuunibyou is definitely no excuse! That kind of person would never think of others....!”

“Shinka used to ask us to call her ‘Mori-sama’ didn’t she? Wasn’t that it?”

The one who spoke was Kannagi, with a smile on her face.

“Don’t call me Mo...mo...mo...Mori-sama! Kannagi, don’t you hate to be called wind chime?! You’re not cured are you? I will definitely cure you!”

“Huh? My nickname is wind chime, but you pronounce my name Kazari. It’s not very effective against me.”

“Aghhhhh!”

Nibutani, or rather, Mori-sama, was bright red in her face as she stomped the ground. Looks like everyone has an affinity huh? If Nibutani is light, then Kannagi-san must be Spirit.

“Yuuta, everyone is so nice. I had no idea. Kannagi-san might be a Spirit.”

Rikka came beside me while I wasn’t paying attention. Everyone, including Rikka, looked so happy. Her usual smile was broad. Nonetheless, it’s quite creepy when I come to the same conclusion as her.

“Yeah, they’re good people.”

“Yes.”

With a big smile, she nodded.

“Oi! Go prepare the barbecue! Gather over here!”

After hearing Nana-chan’s yell, everyone went towards her.

“Remember this. One day, I will put a stop to you.”

Nibutani makes a really good villain. But I’m sure that anyone who says those lines tends to be destroyed.

“I do not know what you are referring to. I am the genuine user of the Devilish Truth Stare.”

And the strongest chuunibyou patient. I don’t know if she’ll ever become aware of it one day.

But today’s class trip was really fun. I had fun and I think Rikka did as well. Someday, I think Rikka will open her heart more.

But now it's time to go enjoy the barbecue.

Chapter 9 : Love Story –Story of Passion–

It was Tuesday and I had something on my mind. This was something that really worried me. I had experienced such a wonderful feeling the previous day when I was talking with Rikka on the mountain.

Up until now I had thought she was cute, that I couldn't leave her alone, and that I wanted to hang out with her, but this was new. Don't get me wrong, I still think she's all of that. This feeling was something that kept building in me until I just suddenly realized it.

Of course I think you know what I'm talking about, but I'm not sure if it's right for me to like her like I am now. If you knew how I was in middle school, you'd obviously think that I would never care for someone. I'd be perplexed once this emotion finally arrived. It's embarrassing to confess my faults, but that's how it is. I never once felt this way when I was in elementary school, middle school, character, or an inhabitant of some random manga's universe. It's just infatuation!

Though I didn't actually raise my voice in frustration, this has left me really confused. It's like I'm reading a detective novel and I'm not sure who the villain is. Let's try to spoil ourselves. I need to talk to someone who's felt this way before.

And so that's why I was eating lunch in the cafeteria with Isshiki. As we were dining, we two men were talking about love.

"You just now realize you like her? Please man, tell me what you've done so far for her wasn't 'liking' someone."

"Well, it's kinda like that? I'd have to say that you described exactly our situation, sir?"

Emphasis on the sir. It's kinda important to show some respect since I'm asking him for advice.

"Hell, how would you explain what you've done for her thus far if you didn't fancy her?"

"Well, I've always thought she was cute. She was like a little sister or one of those type of people that's a pain. But I never liked her romantically before now. Wait, that's somewhat vague. Can't you think someone's cute without liking them? I think that's possible. I mean, I think Kannagi-san is cute, but I don't like her. That's not to say that the rest of the class, including you Isshiki-san, can't fall in love with her."

"What's this now? I love all women man!"

"You're a man of many passions!"

Not really, but I want to hear about your past stories of love, so I gotta prop you up!

"Well, I do know my fair share of love stories! Togashi, from what you're experiencing, I'd say it's similar to what people talk about when they're in love. You're just worrying too much about it."

"I see now... You sound pretty confident about that, and while I think you have a special outlook on this.... You're still single. What's the best way to put this..."

It's a really embarrassing topic to talk about. Love stories are definitely something that makes you blush easily.

"Hmm, I get what you're trying to say. Even though I have my fair share of stories and know what being in love is about, why don't I have a girlfriend huh?"

“Ah, that! That! Isshiki-sensei knows what I’m talking about without me even saying anything!”

“I’ve been wondering about that too man. I get all this information and write it down in my memo pad, I have such enthusiasm for women, and yet I don’t have a girl.”

“You’re just a pervert!”

“.....It’s like that? I’m just a pervert eh? Maybe love is blind. I haven’t experienced real love either, but I had a big crush on someone before. There was a girl I really liked in elementary school.”

“Ah, was it someone who energetically showed off her panties?”

“Nah, she didn’t wear any.”

“.....” I couldn’t think of a retort. What can you say to that? I mean, you don’t expect something like that to pop up in the middle of a story. Damn it, he’s blocked off any escape routes from his story.

“....Actually, I jotted that she didn’t wear panties in my memo pad. Back then, my memo pad wasn’t all about girls. I wrote a fair bit about the guys in my class too. As fate would have it, Akari-chan joined our class’s ‘brat group.’”

“How sad.....” For Akari-chan.

“And then, would you believe it, Akain-chan read out loud to them what I had written down in my memo pad. I cried man. It wasn’t just because of what she did....”

“Akari-chan....!”

It was a story that moved me. Of course, the poor protagonist wasn’t Isshiki, it was Akari-chan. I would cry too if something happened to my friend. Why would she know about such a thing?

"I cried because she said 'Now what you've written will be spread to everyone' to me."

"Were you crying happy tears?!"

"And then I took a vow. From there on, I would collect information and give it to everyone. That's how I became the man I am now."

"So it's Akari-chan's fault you're crooked now?!"

"Well, I was joking about that. I don't have a past that good. This funny story never really happened."

And Isshiki moved back to his usual determined look after a sigh. How far would he go for a joke? Well, I guess the rest of the story wouldn't be spread around.

"Regardless, I can tell you that the Togashi I see in front of me is splendidly in love for the first time, yet he never noticed it before now."

"Ah, we've reached the conclusion of your theory."

Instead of finishing his story, he returned our conversation to what I asked him about. Since I want him to instruct me about love, I have to be grateful. Well, I'll show my gratitude by not mentioning that joke again.

"Well, Togashi man, you need to keep a memo pad. You can write various things in it and let me know what you find out. It'd be a lifesaver."

"I wanted to be taught about love, not perverted actions! How did you misinterpret that?!"

Should I really have asked my friend to teach me? He seems more like a stalker than anything. Well, that stalking is more taking notes than actual stalking of girls (though I am grateful for any information he could share with me), but I'm not sure it's very healthy for him.

"Anyways, you like Takanashi-san, right?"

"Yeah, I think I get that part, but while I'm grateful to you, there's something I just can't sense. It's like my mind's foggy somehow."

"I see man. Well, things were pretty good for you."

"Huh? What do you mean?"

"Got some bad news for you. Looks like Takanashi-san has a boyfriend."

Huh? Boyfriend? Rikka? Boyfriend?! Seriously? You've got to be kidding me. Who? How? When?!

In an instant, my head went into chaos. I was really upset over that news. Come to think of it, there are many things about Rikka that I don't know. Considering that she lives alone and has a somewhat haughty attitude, I figured that she wouldn't have many guests. She would be someone special like that.

But this... this isn't funny. Objectively, she's pretty cute. On looks alone, she's top class. Even Isshiki said that before if I remember correctly.

I thought she was someone that wouldn't be asked out. Then again, that's based on how she acts now. Perhaps this boyfriend knew her earlier. I didn't know how she acted in middle school, so it wouldn't be strange for love to blossom then. Ah, so that's how it is. She had a boyfriend before we met. I see what you were doing Isshiki. You wanted me to know so I could be brokenhearted quickly. I get you man. You know, isn't this the first time I've been brokenhearted? How should I act around Rikka now? I don't know.

So in an inhumanly sad voice, I asked,

"Hey, Isshiki,"

"Gotcha."

“Did you want my heart to be broken!?”

I pinched his cheeks until they were red. Of course it's a lie. Coming from this guy, it had to be one!

“O-Ow man! Hey, I almost bit my tongue there!”

“I'll rip that liar's tongue to shreds!”

“Well, do you see now? You really like her, don't cha? Incidentally, Kannagi-san does have a boyfriend.”

“Seriously?!”

“Yep. You know, I was shocked as well when I heard about her. Oh well, he is an upperclassman. Against that type, your odds of success are low.”

“Is that so? Well, you're right; that was a shock. A system shock.”

“Well, what do you mean by system shock? I'm not talking about shock therapy, but you know what I mean.”

.....I know. No mistake I know. There's a huge difference between saying Rikka has a boyfriend and Kannagi-san having a boyfriend. Still, I couldn't help but be surprised. I would've never expected to feel that different.

“As a representative of the disciplinary committee, I'm supposed to show leadership on inter-gender relationships. Could you have schadenfreude? If you don't, then why did you feel relieved?”

“I don't know what that emotion is!”

“You don't know what schadenfreude is? It's where you drink the sweet nectar of tears from someone's sorrows.”

“Nah, I don't like feeling happy for someone's misfortune nor have I felt a tinge of that before man!”

“Well, this would be like you thinking ‘Takanashi-san is mine! Hahaha! Sucks to be you guys.’ That’s schadenfreude. Quite the scary thing huh? Hmm, I suppose you could say that liking someone could be similar to it in some respects.”

“I’m not sure I catch what you’re saying, but I get what you mean. I know that I really like Rikka. Thanks man.”

That’s good to know. As Isshiki was finishing his lines, he was also finishing his boiled soba. This time we had zaru soba. It’s one of the new items on the summer menu at our cafeteria.

But while I thought this hazy feeling would come off and I’d feel a bit lighter after our talk, nothing of the sort happened. I was still quite hazy. I definitely liked Rikka. Well, I *like* her. You know, I didn’t think this would happen this way when I first thought of her as a little sister or when I couldn’t look away from her chuunibyou problems, but somehow it just ended up that I really like her.

But it’s not even been two weeks. I don’t mean to sound ignorant, but can this feeling suddenly rise in me? Even if I had no idea what it really was? Well, have I actually fallen for her?

Unconsciously, I grew to like her as we were together. It’s like one of those TV dramas. Somehow I’ve fallen without a clear reason why.

Putting that aside, how should I talk with Rikka now? If I do like her like that, then it might be difficult to talk to her knowing how I feel. If any of you have experience falling in love, please give me some advice.

So that’s why I’ll ask my sensei over here.

"Isn't the way you usually talk to her alright? You like her, you want to be with her, you want to hold her... hold on, I'm not going to tell you how to violate any laws."

"That so? I got it. Well, I won't hold her; I'll just talk normally man."

Normal, normal, normal, huh? Well, I can't really say the way we've been is normal, but I guess acting as her contractee is fine.

"Well, you can talk about anything with me man."

And Isshiki-sensei had a huge mysterious smile on his face. Yes, it was that self-satisfied look which was only rumored to exist. Got it. I definitely get the sense I should talk with you when these things pop up.

"One more thing. I told you before you were building those steps of love, so how is this different? Sorry to break it to you, but you're not the person here who's incredibly popular. Don't worry, this master of all women will give you some advice. Take great caution with Takanashi-san."

As he said that, his determined look re-appeared. I'm happy you said that.

"Thanks man. I'll keep that in mind."

And as we were smiling from the hot-blooded male bonding, my favorite ringtone started to play from my pocket.

"Togashi, you're ringing. Don't you want to answer it?"

"Ah, sorry. Forgive me this time."

Of course the caller had to be Rikka.

I took a deep breath before picking up the phone. No surprise, I was nervous. I told myself to act normal about five times, gestured “sorry” to Isshiki and then connected to Rikka.

“Hello, what’s up?”

“It’s me. We’ve finished now. Our teacher is scary. She summoned me during my valuable lunch time.”

“Well, Nana-chan was worrying after what you’ve been through.”

Nana-chan was summoning her after school too. Since there wasn’t much time before the re-test, she was having a special lesson today with Rikka. She came to me earlier and asked “Is it alright if I teach her after school today?” I was curious why she came to clear it by me first.

“Where are you right now, Yuuta? Alas, my phone does not have a tracking device, so I do not know your current location. I need to speak with you about something today.”

A Nana-chan counter-plan huh? You know, I have to praise her somewhat for thinking how to interact normally....

“Oh, I’m in the cafeteria with Isshiki right now.”

“.....Ishiki? Your Four Horsemen’s no.1?”

That’s right. Rikka entered shy mode when they last met, didn’t she? What should I do? Well, maybe if she’s used to him, she won’t enter shy mode anymore. I’ll just hand the phone over to Isshiki and let him talk to her. They’ve not really spoken before. It’s natural to be afraid of strangers.

“Yeah yeah. Hey, would it be alright if you chat with him for a moment or two?”

“.....Understood. Since the danger level has lowered, dialogue between us is possible.”

For some reason Isshiki was surprised at this change. He said softly, “Does she not want to?” It’s like his character changed as well.

I handed over my phone to him. Normally he’d say “Ororo” in his loud voice, but this time he dropped my phone from his hand. I heard a clash when it hit. Hey now, your soba broth jumped a bit too!

After giving me an apologetic gesture, Isshiki picked up my phone.

“Yesyesyesyesyesyesyes, hellohellohellohellohellohello, th-this is Isshiki.”

Quite a humorous way to answer the phone. How many times did he plan on saying “hello?” He looked like he was about to break down. I didn’t have a single clue why he was acting this way.

“What was that noise that sounded like the world was breaking.”

“Ah, Ahahaha, so... sorry about that. This fool dropped it.”

He’s really changed his character! What is he saying?!

“Understood. It is a pleasure to meet you, Four Horsemen number 1.”

“Fo, Four Horsemen no.1?”

Rikka has continued to make Isshiki into my underling. Or perhaps she can’t break that habit of saying it since she first thought about it couple days ago. Hail Isshiki, the first of the Four Horsemen!

“What are you doing with my Devil King?”

“Huh? Oh, your highness’s Devil King is in a good mood today. An awfully good mood. We were just talking about schadenfreude.”

What the hell is this Four Horseman talking about? I have no idea what this conversation is going towards. Why did that topic come out.....

“You should expect that from Yuuta. He has the power to alter others’ unhappiness. The day of his awakening is near. Number 1-san, you will have a lot of work to do as his underling. Is that clear?”

“Ye, Yesssssssss!”

That was quite a strange voice Isshiki made as he handed back my phone.

“So you both talked about you drinking the nectar of other people’s unhappiness, Yuuta?”

How does everyone know about that emotion? I had no idea about it.....Am I an idiot.....? Well, if I am, I’m not going to say it!

“You deserve this praise. After all, you have gotten Number 1 to submit to you already. Such a cool act of power should be expected from you.”

“Huh? Oh, thanks.”

Submit? Isshiki did? Well, I guess you could get that impression from how he talked. Well, at least it looks like this strategy worked. She shouldn’t enter shy mode now.

“So are you going to come to meet us?”

“I’m on my way. Yuuta, use your summoning magic.”

“I don’t have such a power!”

“In that case, I’ll be there soon.”

After she said that, I heard the clicks that indicate our conversation was over. Oh well. I put my phone back in my pocket and looked over to Isshiki, who was crying.

“That...that was my first real conversation with a girl...”

“What?!”

“She’s amazing. She was only talking over the phone, but even through electronic methods, I could feel stimulated by her sighs. It was amazing. Girls really are amazing, aren’t they?”

I was still digesting what he had said. Didn’t he say earlier he was the so-called “master of women?” I smell a fraud. Someone over here has been trapped..

What has he been doing up until now? Surely there’s girls on the moral committee.

“That conversation with Takanashi-san was amazing! Don’t get me wrong, she still has chuunibyou, but her cuteness just increased a hundred-fold!”

“Was she a bad influence on you?!”

Perhaps it was Rikka’s electromagnetic powers. Well, I’m not 100% sure she has them, she is just a normal chuunibyou patient after all.

“I feel born anew. The me of a moment ago was spouting his stupidity over and over towards you man. Chuunibyou.....may not be that bad. I’ll have to write this in my memo pad!”

And just as he pulled out his memo pad from God knows where, Rikka had arrived.

“I have arrived.”

She sat in the seat beside me...scary.....Just be normal.....

“Have you already eaten?”

“Our teacher called me before I could eat.” As she said that, she nodded in approval of my zaru soba. Looks like she wanted some too.

“Is this alright?”

I handed over one of my onigiri from my set to her.

“This cafeteria’s meals are good. Incidentally, Yuuta, did this come with your meal?”

“Why wouldn’t it?! What did you think came with it?”

“This is such an amazing meal!”

It was just the two of us talking now. I thought Isshiki would cut in somewhere, but he was looking at me with his face blushing and back straightened.

Huh.....? Did he enter shy mode.....?

“What is Number 1 doing? Is he submitting?”

“.....I don’t know....”

The mental strain was probably too much for him. Ah, now that I think about it, he was the one that was telling me about schadenfreude. I can’t say that it serves him right.

In the end, lunch time ended with Isshiki never exiting shy mode and making our conversation three-sided.

Chapter 10 : “Don’t call me Mori-sama!”

Wednesday marked the middle of the week. Nana-chan was giving Rikka another lesson today, so I had some spare time. Since I wasn’t in any clubs, and we didn’t have our study group, I suppose it felt weird staying after school but I got a feeling I shouldn’t head home yet.

Yesterday I waited for Rikka, but she told me prior to going in today to leave before she finished. As I thought about her studying diligently in the classroom beside me, I couldn’t think of leaving while she was putting in hard work.

Thus, I was reluctantly studying at my desk in the classroom waiting for Rikka to finish. I didn’t think it would take a while, so I tentatively scheduled something to do with Rikka as she heads back to her apartment. While I was planning it out, I heard someone come in.

“Thank goodness that’s over!” A loud voice entered the classroom as the door opened. Alas, it wasn’t Rikka; it was Nibutani.

“Oh, it’s you Nibutani. What’s going on? Don’t you have club activities?”

Not thinking that someone would be in there, she was probably taken aback by someone calling out to her. She had a “Wha-Wha” overreaction to hearing me, but she wasn’t actually hurt. Hopefully.

“You surprised me! I didn’t sense that anyone was in here.”

“Am I that faint?! Do I exist to you at all?!”

“You don’t need to snap at me, but yeah, you don’t really have much of an existence. Does that bother you? Oh well, don’t worry about it.”

I will worry about it! It's been on my mind a lot lately. When one of my classmates wonders who would call out to them, it would naturally hurt my feelings.

"Well, that's alright.... But it's unusual for you to return to the classroom at this time. What's going on?"

".....I had a remedial lesson too."

Ah, I could sense that sadistic impression starting to rise within her. Damn. I forgot about that.

"Oh, Nana-chan's personal lesson, eh? I forgot that you might be in there too. So um.... how did it go?"

"I got the impression that only Takanashi-san and I failed. No one else was there."

No one else huh? Only them? Wow, I imagine that must have been quite the scene. I wonder what they talked about.

Although the two of them have chatted before, I can't think of anything interesting that they could say to one another. But you never know: somehow the number 1 girl in the class could have something bursting inside to talk about. That could be why she's so easy to chat with!

"I see. Just the two of you then.... Did you chat with Rikka any?"

"Hmm... just a bit. Curious?"

Nibutani continued to pack her bags and acted like she was heading to her club with little interest in continuing our conversation after that.

"I wasn't interested that much, but I thought that would be surprising if you did."

I said mostly what I was thinking. Surprising wasn't exactly the phrase I wanted to say.

"Oh? I wouldn't have minded talking more, but it looks that Takanashi-san doesn't really talk to anyone besides you."

"That is surprising! Did you two even speak to another?!"

"We simply had an ordinary conversation. I didn't want to hear her make up stories."

Having finished her preparations to leave, Nibutani came over and sat on my desk, giving me a good look at her long legs. I was a bit surprised as her actions, but she just lightly sighed.

"It'll be harsh with just the two of them there. I don't know if she could keep her composure with that evil eye chuunibyō flowing through her veins. Wouldn't you think she'd have difficulties understanding what Ms. Nana-chan is teaching?"

Ah, probably. I'm not sure that Nana-chan would be able to filter through the terminology Rikka uses to find out what she's actually saying.

"By the way, what would she say to Nana-chan?"

"'Devilish Truth Stare invoked! Put the entire world to sleep! Release my power! Spirits of the Escaped World, Angels of the Four Heavenly Equations come here!' You know, things like that, right? I'm not sure that Nana-chan could give any help after hearing that."

Yeah, that's what she would say. I'm not sure even I could say anything to help her after hearing that....

"Well, I'm sure that Nana-chan will get her to understand somehow.... Oh, are you already leaving Nibutani?"

"You're still calling me Nibutani?" She commented back with one of her rare smiles.

"Huh, well, aren't you Nibutani?"

"Look, Mo.....Mo... 'Mori-sama'....."

Huh? She's turned meek. That cuts right into her sadistic persona.

"No, that's something you don't want to be called. If you don't like me saying it, I don't have to keep saying your family name....."

"That's fine. Everyone else has been calling me that since that trip. I don't know if they mean to hurt me, but I can't tell them 'Don't call me Mori-sama!' or something like that."

"I don't know why you can't say that to the class, but I get you. I too can't tell someone not to call me something like Geruzoniansasu."

"Geruzoniansasu."

A bold smile crossed her face as she started to feel like she beat me. Yeah, that's Nibutani all right. The meek version just doesn't feel right.

".....I could call you Mori-sama now, but you're Nibutani. Like I said before, you really give off that impression. It's calming to call you that. I'm not sure about other nicknames like Class Rep or Class King."

"I'm already used to being called different things, so any of those would be fine. I am aware of why you call me the way you do. But, you know, Class King has a good sound to it. I really like it, so you should call me that instead, alright?"

Why she's pleased with that nickname, I have no idea. I can't come up with a good reply to that, so I'll just ask something else that's been on my mind.

“Hey, according to that story, you told people to ‘Call me Mori-sama!’ but now you’ve changed. Could that be because of Shichimiya....?”

“Shichimiya never called me that!....Well, don’t you have something small that you want to change? Like your dark history?”

Nibutani spoke like she was almost grumbling, but I know that feeling.

Thinking back on it, Shichimiya was that type of girl.... Even knowing I was suffering from evil eye chuunibyou, she would have fun with me. She’s such an amazing girl. She’d include things in my creations, and of course they’d be cool. She knew just how to tickle my chuuni spirit. But the most important thing I remember is how she was infected with it just like I was. Originally I thought it was due to my influences, but I suppose you could say it was also due to her parents.

“Well, I think it’s apparent that Shichimiya became that way because of you. I wonder if you were a bad influence on her.”

“A bad influence eh? And then you tried to help her recover?”

“That’s about it. It’s why I believe in what I do now.” Nibutani added. Her comments thickened the mood.

Usually my expressions are quite vivid, so I guess she could tell I was perplexed. Reading my mind, Nibutani continued on,

“I don’t think anyone desires to have no history, but I think everyone, myself included, desires a proper white history. Well, I guess Mori-sama is part of mine.”

I see now. It’s really hard to imagine the Nibutani I know now wanting to be called Mori-sama instead of Nibutani. Perhaps at that time she did, but perhaps now Nibutani considers that dark history.

"It's just like you've said before, I think it would be better if the me from then died. That's why I thought you would be appreciative of my desire to cure chuunibyou. But instead, you've fallen for Takanashi-san, haven't you?"

"As always, I can't follow your train of thought! Well, that's not the reason why I like her."

I finally noticed that I fell into her trap. Curse my rebuttal nature! That defective part of me emerges again.

"So you've finally fallen for her, huh? Well, it's not like I didn't know."

".....Please be silent."

I couldn't say anything but such an uncool request.

"Only about ten percent of our class knows. Be relieved."

"What about everyone else?"

"News may travel fast!"

That daring Nibutani smile returns again. It's a truly frightening sight. I don't think she's shown that to anyone but me. No one else in our class knows that smile.

"Though you say you like her, you don't admit to changing her."

"Demon! Brute! Devil! Mo, Mori-sama!"

Though I said the last one in some sense of honor, it came out like an insult.

"Don't call me Mori-sama! Agh, look, don't say that! Do you want to die in agony?"

It's like she said before. That's definitely a new way to kill someone. Sorry! I don't want to die by embarrassment!

“Ah, I got it. Everything. I got everything.”

“Wow, hearing that really makes me want to get away. Everything, huh? Oh well, it is what it is. It was fun to see you fumble around.

I feel like I don’t know her true weakness at all. Past, present, everything seems to be rolled against me with how much she knows about my past. Is she a demon? Is Mori-sama really a demon? She’s not really a light monster? If so, then why is the Devil King (Rikka-titled) afraid of her...

“Well, I’ve got to go to club activities. I imagine Takanashi-san will be done soon. Waiting for her?”

“Even if you didn’t say anything about your lesson, I would have.....”

“Alright, later. Bye-bye!”

“Bye”

And then thirty minutes after she left, a weary Rikka returned to the classroom. Perhaps Rikka’s inability to do the lesson exceeded Nibutani’s predictions.



Rikka was really disheartened when she came back to the classroom. I could feel it from deep inside her. Though we weren’t having our study meeting, she turned her chair towards me and collapsed on my desk.

I asked her why she was so tired, and she replied that today Nana-chan was like a Spartan. She kept replying “Wrong! Again!” Well, I can imagine her doing that today.

“Even though you went through that, you got some reward from it. What were your results?”

Rikka stretched out and for some reason grabbed her pencase from her bag and pulled out her usual mechanical pencil. What kind of results are these?

“Yuuta, here’s the results of my practice. Watch.”

“Okay.”

I thought she would show me how she solved a difficult problem, but it looks like she’s going to do something else. I will say that she was brimming with confidence though.

She grabbed the pencil and brought it in front of my face. Next she swung the pencil around.

“The results of practice, huh? Have you thought about a name?”

“This is the first time I’ve produced such a technique, yet anyone could see that it’s an optical illusion!”

Well, yes, I’m sure you could call it something like a rubber pencil illusion. But my impression was that she was lazing about. Perhaps during the solitary lesson, maybe her thoughts wandered and she looked at the scenery outside....

And then Nana-chan went Sparta on her.

“What name sounds good?”

“Well, I think you could name it something like Rubber Pencil Illusion....

“Hmm, that’s not very cool.”

“.....You’re right, but isn’t simplistic naming alright? It reminds me of an eraser.”

“I’d like something stronger!”

“Stronger? How strong can an ordinary optical illusion be..... Oh! How about using something like a sword title? Something like ‘Rubberball: Wave Tuning Sword.’”

Wow, that’s old. That’s so old it’s dangerous! I was the one came up with that comparison, I know people have been comparing pens with swords for years. As usual, my taste varies tremendously.

“Yuuta is certainly a genius! From hence forth this shall be called ‘Rubberball: Wave Tuning Sword!’”

“You actually like that name?! Well, thinking about it, names like that aren’t popular, so they won’t be passed on... Granted, they’re typically rejected....”

Or in other words, people understand best that it’s just a pencil moving back and forth.

Thought she rejected my earlier idea, she’s enjoying playing around with her pencil like a sword. Speaking of cutting things, I need to talk to her about something.

“Oh yeah, Rikka. Do you have some spare time today?”

“Time has no meaning for a being such as me. Any time could be considered spare time.”

You started off very magnificently, but that second part kinda fell apart a bit. So let’s abbreviate it instead. Say something like that, and let’s just ignore the magnificent portion.

“I’d be really happy if you stopped by my house today.”

Or course, this is neither a date nor an invitation for one. Regardless, I hope my face doesn't appear too embarrassed. To be honest, I really need Rikka to come over as soon as possible.

"Let's go! Let's go! We're leaving now!"

I'm so grateful that she's this interested. With how she was lazily playing around with a pencil, it's hard to believe she had the energy to quickly pack her things. She's even rushing me...why?

But I'm really relieved. I had to request she perform an urgent mission. It's not what you'd think, but it would definitely relieve me some.

As we left school, I told Rikka what her mission was while we headed towards my house. The mission, in short, is to remove the eyepatch from my sister, Yumeha. Normally that girl would get tired of it after a day or two, but she's shown no signs of removing it any time soon. Her black eye is still sealed to this day.

One day I told my parents about Rikka and the reason why she started wearing an eye patch. They started to worry about what the neighborhood would think and gave me a warning.

If Yumeha would have fun making things up by herself, that's fine by me. The problem comes when you wear an eyepatch. Typically, you only wear one when your eye is injured, so that's cause for the neighbors to worry. Obviously that would be the normal reaction.

Whenever I asked her to take it off, she would be stubborn and say "I'm going to destroy aliens with Rikka!" So as a last resort, I'm asking Rikka to help me get her to remove it.

"Oh well, we'll have to initiate a method of awakening that does not involve sealing."

And so I hope Rikka will be able to do something about this.

When we arrived, the only person at my house was Yumeha. Since she goes to a nursery near our house, she doesn't have a problem coming home by herself. Back when I was her age, my parents would worry I would go somewhere else, but now that I've grown up, those worries have gone away. So let's go meet my sister.

"Onii-chan, welcome back! AH! Rikka! Rikka! Rikka came here!"

As soon as Yumeha saw Rikka, her voice became energetic and she started jumping up and down. I'm really happy that she became attached to Rikka for some reason since they first met. Seeing how happy she was made me just as happy.

"Rikka! What are you carrying out today?"

"Yumeha, thank you for continuing the seal. Yuuta has brought me forth for that reason. We must execute practices to continue awakening Devilish Truth Stare Another Type."

"Ooh!"

Rikka had bent down to look Yumeha in the eye while talking. I guess she likes children. Though it wasn't her usual smile, she gave off a big one to them. It helped produce a cuddling atmosphere, so it's quite easy to see why Yumeha became attached to her. The two of them were quite a scene.

As I watched over this charming sight,

"Now let's hurry to Yuuta's room for practices!"

And all of a sudden I became a bit upset at what Rikka just said.

"Eh? Nonono, what's going on?! Why can't you use the living room?!"

“I want to enter Yuuta’s room. I wanna, I wanna.”

Now she’s just a spoiled child. She’s reached Yumeha’s level.

Well, by straightening things, I should have hidden anything they shouldn’t see. I just don’t want to be embarrassed by having them in my room. As usual though, she’s so stubborn that I have to give in.

“I’m going in.”

“That’s not desiring anymore, that’s actually doing it!....I got it, I got it. You can practice in my room.”

I had to accept this would happen. Well, I did go into Rikka’s room, so I guess payback takes priority over my own feelings.

“Yay! Let’s to Onii-chan’s room! Let’s go!”

And the three of us entered my room.

“This is Yuuta’s room. It’s unusually white.”

“What does that mean?! It’s white like any ordinary room!”

I think she might have thought badly of it since it’s white. Well, I can’t say that there was a time where everything was covered in pitch black cloths.

“Mother said that Onii-chan’s room used to be pitch black before.”

Too fast! Rikka, having sharp hearing, picked up what Yumeha had said and looked towards me with a nod and smile that said “That’s the Yuuta I know.” Damn, I’m not going to get embarrassed. I’m not going to. I’m going to draw up a barrier to protect me from dying today.

“Now, let’s begin practicing!”

And so she began reading in a monotone voice. It was a skill that wore me down.

“Well, since I don’t have anything to do with your practices, I’ll go grab snacks and something to drink. It’s fine to go ahead without me.”

“AlIIIIII right! Rikka, hurry and start!”

Yumeha began tugging on Rikka’s skirt in a happy manner. That was the scene which I flusterly left my room to. After shutting the door, I could still hear Yumeha’s energetic voice. It appeared that they were starting their exercises.

I murmured “Rikka, I’m counting on you. Please remove her eyepatch,” as I headed towards the refrigerator.

I easily found tea and coffee inside the refrigerator, but there was a variety of snacks. I poured three glasses that I found in the kitchen. I put them, plus some onigiri crackers, on a tray before heading back to my room.

—I’m at a loss for words.

What awaited me was the sight of Rikka and Yumeha cuddling while Rikka read out loud portions of a black notebook. I thought I had perfectly hidden it. I had no idea I would return to this picture. Well, perhaps it would take some time to understand what was there.

While I was quickly gone from my room, their practices had turned it into Hell. Looking down at the scene, I saw tragedy, or as you might guess, my dark history.

“WHOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO, AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH,
NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!”

I had reached the breaking point. I’m not sure you could call what I said English.

“Rikka.”

“My name is Yumeha!”

Rikka looked serious while Yumeha had a smile on her face. The two looked up as I yelled my nonsensical outburst and re-introduced themselves for some reason. After a moment, the two returned looking at the headquarters of dark history, my dark notebook (the real thing!).

Simply saying that traffic lights were going off in my head would be incorrect. All I could see was red lights flashing before me. Bright red traffic lights were signaling me to be cautious in proceeding any further.

“No, Nottt, Gooooo. That’s not alright! Re- re-return thaaaaaat!”

I placed the tray in my hand, which was blocking me from retrieving that notebook, on my bed and headed in a straight line towards Rikka. I thought it would be easy to get it back since we’re in such a cramped room.

But Rikka’s speed outclassed my own. Her skirt fluttered. Her hair bobbed. It was like we were moving in slow motion the instant I returned back.

“What?! That fast?! Wow!”

I went towards the space where my notebook was being held, but I lost my balance and went head first towards where Rikka was previously.

“It’s imprinted!”

I could hear Yumeha’s voice beside me in my fallen down state. She was clapping her hands towards Rikka. No respect for your older brother, huh? I can’t let my little sister see her cool brother like this!

“Re, return that!”

I laid prostrate on the ground. I had just showed my little sister just how uncool her brother can be.

“No! This notebook is required for our practices!”

An immediate denial. I guess it's my lot in life to surrender to her, huh?

"No, it has nothing to do with them! Besides, it's dangerous! Dangerous! If you look at it, your eyes will explode!"

That's all I could think up! Surely she'll recognize how dangerous that book is now!

"If that is true, then the seal transition cannot be completed."

"Huh.....?!"

Seal transition, or removing my sister's eyepatch in other words, requires Rikka to have that collection of my dark history abilities I wrote down. My dark history is compensation for that removal. If I don't let her have it, the eyepatch stays on. The decision lies with me. That's an expensive eyepatch.....!

"Isn't there another way you can transition it.....? Surely there's some other way, right?"

"Hmm, can't we use the one Yuuta wrote down in here? If you used it, then surely it'll work out."

Then I'll die. I hate this.

"It's not useable! Everything in there is not useable! Is there any other way.....?"

"Alas, there is none." Rikka commented while shaking her head. The one who's depressed is me, not you!

I stopped before retorting again. I remember what happened earlier today. Oh well, guess it's time to use my trump card.

"There is none, huh? I thought the Devilish Truth Stare was supposed to be the best!"

Rikka's reaction fluttered. She looked somewhat delighted at hearing that. This started well, but I've learned not to be too optimistic.

"The Devilish Truth Stare is the best, but with this notebook, our success rate jumps to 100%. That's why it's absolutely necessary."

"....."

Looks like my only choice is to give up. It's a bitter option, but after a period of silence, I gave my dark past over to Rikka.

".....I understand. Make it happen.....!"

My eyes started to water. It's not laughing matter. I'm seriously going to cry here.

"Understood."

".....So how did you find this....."

"Yumeha discovered it! I pulled it from Oni-chan's drawer!" Yumeha replied to my grumbling.

"Don't open things on a whim!"

"Allllll right!"

She shows no remorse! Damn.... I thought by putting it in there, no one would find it amongst the other notebooks in my desk. Big mistake.....

While I was hanging my head, I moved to my bed and picked up the tray. I poured tea into the glasses and handed one each to Rikka and Yumeha. Both of them drank it all in one gulp. After that, Yumeha snuck over and grabbed one of the onigiri crackers. She's really not reflecting on her actions.

Rikka was reading my dark history notebook, not with a smile, but seriously. That's my only saving grace in this situation right now. If she starts to laugh, I'll die immediately!

"Yumeha, I am going to prepare a new way of awakening without having to seal your eye."

While she was reading the notebook, Rikka informed my sister of the start of her seal transfer.

"Oh! Amazing! Amazing! Now! Now!"

Wait just a moment. Rikka replied as she was flipping through the pages of the notebook again. "Yumeha, what kind of intermediate would you like to use? Something like a doll would make this possible."

"A doll?"

After looking puzzled, Yumeha quickly got up and pitter-pattered over to her room. Without any questions, she came back holding a doll to show Rikka.

"This! Onii-chan bought it for my birthday! He's called Dosukoi Kuma Gotarou!"

"The bear is quite lovely."

Hearing her praise the bear feels like a compliment to me, but then again, he's not that fashionable. When I got him, I was having trouble picking out something that my sister would like. When it came time to choose, I asked if there was "One that didn't look like it was relaxed." Of course, Yumeha thought Dosukoi Kuma Gotarou was cute. It was my pleasure little sister.

Incidentally, if you press the belly button of this not-so-cute doll, he'll sing "Geberobe." Definitely not a cute doll at all. Well, the most important part is that she likes him.

"Will Dosukoi Kuma Gotarou be alright?" Yumeha inquired with concern as she and Rikka looked over the doll.

"He'll be fine. Now, prepare for awakening transitioning."

While she was saying that, Yumeha handed over Dosukoi Kuma Gotarou.

"In order to seal, the eyepatch is needed as well."

And Yumeha successfully took it off. Way to go Rikka! Looks like the mission I gave you was a success. After Rikka said that, Yumeha turned around and looked for validation.

"Is this alright?" she asked in a concerned voice.

"His and your safety is assured."

What kind of danger would happen after this.... I don't even remember a fraction of what technique this is. If I tried to do it now, I'd be completely lost.

After she confirmed their safety, Rikka cuddled close to Yumeha. She slowly began to brush her head.

"The mystical ceremony now releases power."

"OH! Yumeha's power is being released! WOW!"

"The technique has ended. Now switching to ultimate secret phase. Phase one completed. Phase two begin. Haaaaaaaaa"

An unusual power (?) like substance was gathered in her body. She began yelling like she was a character in a fighting series. And then,

"Ultimate Secret Phase! Ryuuru Star!"

There was no signature pose added to that yell. Rikka tilted her head up and held Dosukoi Kuma Gotarou above her as she yelled. Yumeha's eyes glittered as she looked onto the stationary Rikka.

You know, this is em....embarrassing.... I remember this now. Tilting my head up and calling out to a star. While this appears to have 0 effect on the seal, it has plenty of effect towards me. You guessed it. The kind where I die in agony. I really shouldn't have given this to her. Why did I do that again?

After declaring the secrets, Rikka attached the eyepatch to Dosukoi Kuma Gotarou and said in a small voice that it was completed.

"Rikka? Is it done? Was it a success?"

"Just barely. Now with this, your eye will awaken one day without having to be sealed."

Just barely huh? At least it was a success for me (in removing her eyepatch). I let out a sigh of relief.

"YAY! Now I can destroy aliens with Rikka! Eh... Ryuuru Star!"

.....My sister inherited a new trick. That means today's injured party is me! Well, her eyepatch did come off, so I'll bare it as an older brother.

"Now Yumeha, suddenly awakening is dangerous. That's why you should equip this." Rikka pulled a new tool out of her bag (likely some unusual magic device) and handed it to Yumeha. Of course she was delighted to receive it.

Looking on the scene, I spoke what came to mind. ".....Where did you get that? It looks like free candy from an old lady from Osaka....."

"It's not candy. It's a Power Stone."

....She didn't deny it was from an old lady from Osaka.

"Beautiful! It's red and blue and green and yellow! Are you really giving this to me, Rikka?"

Looking at the magic device Yumeha had in her hand, I saw three small red stones, four small green stones, and one small stone for blue and yellow. With all of them scattered and tied together, it's quite a pretty Power Stone (?) accessory present.

"This is a present. It is not used to seal anything, so you can remove it at any time."

While listening to Rikka, Yumeha immediately put it on. She showed it to me while saying "Beaut-ful."

"Are you sure it's alright for her to have it? It looks expensive...."

"Relax. These are just stones I found at the beach."

"Not very Powerful.... Oh well, I'm sure these stones have some effect when combined into the Power Stone....."

"When a spell is recited, the Golden Hero is revived."

"Golden Hero?!"

Sounds like an adventure is beginning. Regardless, I'm not so sure this isn't a joke item. I know that Rikka wouldn't give out an ordinary accessory that a girl would wear.

"By my estimate, it's a 22% increase in power."

"Is that a joke you maniac? Who would know that?!"

"Yuuta would."

....I did know that.

"Well, thank you. Yumeha, don't forget to thank Rikka."

"Ah, Yep! Thank you Rikka!"

“No problem. I hope the Ocean King protects you.”

What kind of divine protection are you talking about? I’m not sure something’s in there.

Thus nothing else could be said. Yumeha underwent a class change from a Rikka-style seal eyepatch to a Power Stone. Since she can wear this like an accessory, there shouldn’t be any problems. As long as she forgets about awakening, this will be alright. I’m eagerly praying she forgets about it.

After this the two girls played around with practices and yelling about defeating aliens. It was a little lonely watching them without any henchmen of my own, but since it was such a charming sight, it’s alright.

Chapter 11 : Last Day

It was two days after the second Nana-chan personal lesson. Yeah, it was Friday. One day remained before the re-test. It was our final day to study.

The bell rang after fourth period to signal that it was the beginning of lunch time. Usually I'd head to the cafeteria with Isshiki and order some morisoba, but today I had a different idea.

I was going to ask Rikka if she wanted to eat together. Oh this is nerve-wracking! Well, that's natural for a guy. Suddenly asking a girl "Hey, would you like to go eat something?" feels like you're asking her out on a date.

Just thinking about that is already making me embarrassed. But thinking about doing something and then not doing it isn't good for me. So after taking a deep breath to calm my beating heart, I went to chat with Rikka.

"Rikka, would you like to eat with me?" Damn, that came out in a high pitch.

She turned around and said "Sure."

She replied, but I was a little worried. My brow became tight. If I head too strongly into Rikka Territory, she might change her mind.

"Oh, um, it's with Issihiki. Is that alright?"

This reply decides it all.

"Sure."

Somehow, this feels different from what I originally wanted. Perhaps it's due to how clumsily I asked those questions.

"Ah, where would you like to eat? I brought my lunch today."

“Since you went through that trouble, anywhere outside would be fine. As long as we are in the darkness of the shade, there is a possibility we will continue living.”

Don’t pretend that we’re vampires now! We wouldn’t be able to go outside during the day if that were true. Well, Rikka wanted to be in the shade while we ate, so anywhere with that would be alright. After getting a yes from her, I headed towards Isshiki. Rikka came toddling behind me.

“Isshiki! Let’s eat lunch man. Doesn’t eating lunch with Rikka today sound good to you?”

He opened his eyes in a comically large fashion and stared at me. Is that supposed to be happiness or troubled? I can’t tell. Ah, is this Shy Mode again? It might be Carp Mode with the way his mouth is open.

“Wh, What’s this.....? You serious?”

“I’m telling you the truth.”

“Oi, oi! Don’t joke around with me man....why today.....”

Huh? Usually when I say something interesting, it’s ignored. Granted, there are times when it is stupid and should be ignored. Perhaps I should stop....

But he should’ve heard what I said this time. Maybe he thought I was playing around or perhaps today was an incredibly bad time for him. Could be either.

“Man, I’m not joking.....”

“Not that... Today would be impossible for me to join you.... We’re having a disciplinary council at lunch... Ah, the two selections draw near. So I’d be eating with you and...Takanashi-san? The other day I couldn’t talk with her.

Perhaps I could avenge myself today? Well, if asked, I'd love to choose the second option....."

He was at his wits end. Nah, his serious character had already fallen apart. Hearing him speak, it had to be the former.

"No, you can't disrupt order by not attending your own meeting man. I'm the one who's always saying you have to give a good example of what to do, right? If I don't go, someone would always comment that I didn't attend my own meeting if I asked them to do something for me. Yeah, I should've said that to begin with. Though you've tempted me, I am a disciplinary council member. I've got four or five things that I need to accomplish."

After talking out loud it seems he picked the bitter option. While it sounded like an idiotic soundboard, the final response was definitely Isshiki. His Buddha-like expression continued.

"I'm looking ahead beyond today. I'll go to my meeting, but I have one thing to ask of you. Don't disrupt the pure relationship between guys and girls. You cannot do that. After all, you never know when I'll check on you two. I'm off. My longer-than expected hesitation time is over."

He had such a dazzling presence that I was tempted to look for a halo above him.

"Ah, good luck man."

Isshiki got up and started walking briskly down the hallway as if he was a soldier. He couldn't run after all. After his determination faltered, he returned back to the classroom.

Did you forget something? Ah, you didn't take your lunch. No, that wasn't it. With an earth-shattering determined look, he grabbed both my shoulders.

“.....Next time, I want in.”

And then he left the classroom again. That halo was gone and replaced with impurity. I think the devil would override his angel for the time being. Oh well, that’s just Isshiki being Isshiki. He’s still that determined guy who’s in love with girls.

“Yuta, what’s going on with Number 1?”

Rikka had hidden behind me and was grabbing my shirt.

“Hmm, today looks to be bad for him. Something to do with the disciplinary council.”

While I was saying that, I breathed a sigh of relief.

“Well, looks like we’ll be dining for two. Shall we go?”

“Let’s.”

And so we left the school in search of a shady spot. Rikka was frantically trying to stay in the shadows to keep in line with her earlier statement. One ray of sunlight means game over for her. I kept that in mind as I searched until we found a bench underneath a tree.

“That look alright?”

“It’s shaded therefore survival is possible.”

We sat on the bench. There wasn’t anyone around us, so it looks like we found a nice out-of-the-way spot. While I had been tempted by things one after another, my head was finally starting to get in gear. I was able to remember today’s objective.

“Let’s start by saying thanks for our food.”

Rikka had already taken her usual bento from the convenience store and placed it on her lap. She put her hands together, and I matched her with my own lunch box on my lap. We thanked out loud for the food we were about to eat.

“Hey, would it be alright if I asked something strange?” I asked as we began to eat. Rikka looked over, opened her mouth, and tilted her head in confusion.

“Not like that. You and I are contracted, right? But even as a contractee, there’s still so much I don’t know about you. I’ve been thinking about that lately.”

That’s a quite phrasing it distantly. It’s something a true Japanese person would say.

“I understand.”

Rikka nodded her head “yes, yes.” She stopped moving her chopsticks.

“This is actually why I invited you for lunch today. Is that alright?”

“I have no problems with that.”

“Okay, that’s good. I don’t mean that I just want to know these because I’m a special contractee, alright?”

Rikka replied with a smile and a small laugh.

“There’s also a lot that I want to know about Yuuta. Example: the date of your birthday.”

Ask away. Anything’s fine.

Afterwards we had an incredibly inconsequential conversation. We talked about things like Rikka’s bloodtype being AB, her dual personalities (envious?), her enjoyment of my favorite food: that gum I introduced her to. It

really wasn't important; just an ordinary conversation. You could compare it to a couple talking about themselves at a marriage interview.

When we talked about loving something, I'm sure my face got extremely flushed. I didn't want her to know what I was feeling, but I've got a hunch that didn't go as planned.

You know, that might have been the first time we had an ordinary conversation together. Usually there's made-up stories interweaved in our conversations, but this was just questions and answers.

But it wasn't enough. I want to know more about her. Well, wouldn't it be fine if I slowly found this out over time?

"That would be nice."

"Stop reading my mind!" is what I was thinking. Actually, what she was calling "nice" was my lunch. Rikka was motionlessly staring at my octopus wiener. Her eye was sparkling. I could sense drool coming.

Rikka's lunch was the normal convenience store variety, more specifically the nori kind. While the type of water bottle I normally use is somewhat feminine, at least I didn't compliment it by making something like pasta (though that would be good). I'm not sure Rikka would be fixated on that.

Besides, this lunch has one more objective. That would be this.

"Want some?"

Rikka's face suddenly rose. Her eye met mine. Then it returned to the octopus wiener.

"Is that alright?"

"Since it's for you, I suppose I could give you some."

“Oh! Yuuta’s definitely the Flames of Darkness Chef. That would be alright.”

And so she closed her eye and opened her small mouth wide. Such good behavior(?).

Wait. Seriously? You want me to feed you? Isn’t this the opposite of what normally happens? This is definitely reversing the usual cliché. Aren’t I the one who’s supposed to go “ahhhhh?” Oh well, this should be alright.

I used my chopsticks to grab a wiener from my lunch and moved towards Rikka’s mouth.

“Lo, Look! You, You better eat this!” I bit my tongue. Ooh, damn this is nervewracking....

I was supposed to go “Here!” and be fed. This just makes me want to die of embarrassment.

“Oh! This is delicious!”

Rikka evaluated it with an unusually loud voice. She was all smiles. That’s the sign of someone who really enjoyed eating something delicious. Oh well, this is a good reaction. Looks like my decision to wake up early and make this paid off.

“.....This is the best flavor. I want more of this.”

Rikka had returned back to her usual character, but she was still saying things with such a happy tint. I know that if she’s saying things like that, she’s truly happy. But what was the ingredient that made her so happy?

“Yeah, it’s good. It’s like a whole meal. And the meat is wrapped in asparagus too. Very nutritious.”

“This must be the rumored ‘Meat in Gemüse.’⁸”

“If you were going to use another language, why not just call it ‘Meat in Vegetable?!’”

Why can’t you use this country’s terms? Gemüse.....? I only knew what you were saying up to meat! Letting something go past me feel so vexing!

“Incidentally, did you make all of this Yuuta?”

“Ah, yeah. It’s not too hard to make something at this level.”

“Oh, Yuuta has so much female power in him. You really do.”

“Don’t you mean husband?! Don’t say any more about that!”

Rikka was continuing to stare at my lunch, but when she wasn’t looking, I lifted it up.

“Humh!”

That quick movement was Rikka trying to take away my lunch. But, you know, my intention was to live life more wildly. Even today’s cooking was a wild man’s lunch. You should get that impression when you see that octopus weiner. It’s meat! Meat I tell you!

But as we were talking back and forth, an unconcerned individual walked by in front of us. I looked away the moment our eyes met. Please just keep walking. God, please grant my wish.

“What are you two doing over there?”

Why she took an interest in us, I don’t know, but Nibutani came over to us. With her light gait, I’m sure she’ll have her usual sadistic impression today.

⁸ The exact translation of the kanji is “meat wrapped in vegetable” like Yuta comments, but Rikka used German instead.

“Oh, we’re just having lunch....Do you have any business with us?”

Since Rikka enters Shy Mode (or is it really Disliked Mode?) around Nibutani, I’ve got no choice other than to speak with her for both of us. She’s already turned into a statue.

“I don’t have anything in particular; I was just casually passing by. I saw you two over here having a lot of fun and I just wanted to check if you were causing any disturbances.”

“What kind of grudge do you have against us?!”

Rikka had come to the same thought I did. She nodded her head many times.

“Well, I can’t say it was your fault that horrid nickname was revealed to the whole class, but it’s probably my beliefs that brought me here.”

That’s really some kind of grudge, and I can’t help being bothered by how you’re speaking.

Beliefs huh? The kind that want to fix chuunibyou?

“Well, you two seem to be acting normally, so I’ll take a wait-and-see approach for now as long as you don’t go on a rampage. If that happens..... well, don’t you want to die in agony Togashi-kun? That’d happen. Later.”

After finishing, she walked off like she had something else to do. As expected, that sadistic nature came out.

“Ooh, I really dislike that person Yuuta!”

“Shh! Don’t let her hear you! I don’t know what she’d do, but we might want to leave from this place.

“Understood.”

We began walking in search of another shady spot.



After our run-in with Nibutani, we finished our lunch break with more childish stories. And then, we had our final after school study time before her re-test. When no one was around, we joined our desks together and began studying.

“Alright, tomorrow’s your re-test. We’re not going to sprint through any new material. Since today’s our last day, we’ll have a review of everything we’ve covered. Oh, right. Today, you are prohibited from using the Devilish Truth Stare’s power.”

I tried to slip in a joke with what Rikka would say. But she didn’t look that happy.

“Last day.....”

She was contemplating that. Well, tomorrow’s the actual test, so perhaps she’s nervous.

“It’s all right Rikka. Will you give it your all? Then you’ll definitely pass that test!”

“.....yeah.”

Rikka smiled and nodded. She’s alright after all.

“Ah...Yuuta. That fragmented spell is disappearing.”

“Huh?”

I looked down and that “yu” in round hiragana on the back of my left hand had disappeared a bit.

“Looks like it. Disappeared fast, didn’t it? Well, I just won’t wash there.”

“It’s alright, I can re-write it again.”

“Nah, it’s a bit embarrassing.”

“.....Oh.” Rikka sounded disappointed and covered her head.

“It’s alright, don’t worry. I’ll definitely carry out this contract.”

“Of course you shall, you have been contracted.”

“I got it. Understood. Now let’s get to work solving this general review problem set.”

“Leave it to me! I’ll do my best!”

“Oh! That’s the spirit!”

So our last after school study session regarding math ended.

After the final bell rung, signaling the end of the day, we left the classroom. Looking outside, you could see the twilight of summer.

It was silent. Usually she switches over to her made-up stories once we finish, but today she didn’t. The somewhat weary Rikka walked beside me.

Looking at Rikka, I was also affected by a melancholic feeling. That’s right, we’ve finished our last session. But we still have science sessions to go, so aren’t there more fun times ahead? She looks lonely now. Silently we changed our shoes and headed outside. As it is, once we reached our usual parting place, I opened my mouth and began to talk.

“Rikka. Give it your best tomorrow! I’ll help you in any way I can. But in return, you have to show me your results!”

“Yuuta, I don’t have to show them to you. It’s already been decided what I’ll score.”

“What?!”

“A perfect 100.” Rikka flashed the Victory sign.

“I look forward to it.”

“Watch me.”

Alright. Later.”

“See you tomorrow. Bye bye.”

Like that, we went our ways.



That night I passed time like usual in my room. I didn’t have anything to worry about personally with re-tests, but I just couldn’t calm myself down. I laid on my bed and tried to read a mystery novel, but I only got three pages in before I closed it. Why can’t I calm down?

I guess my training papa and meddling mama blood has made me concerned about Rikka. Nono, I can’t think like that. I have to believe she’ll go and get that perfect score. But why can’t I calm down?

I took a deep breath.....but that didn’t help.

Then my favorite ringtone from my cellphone started going off. I instantly pulled it off the charger and checked who it was. Of course I knew from the ringtone that it was Rikka. I looked down and saw on the screen it was † User of the Devilish Truth Stare, Rikka Takanashi † . I also saw that it was midnight. I thought that this was quite a late call as I answered it.

“It is I.”

As soon as I pressed the button her voice went into my ear. How she knew when I answered it I don’t know, but this wasn’t her usual voice.

“What’s going on?”

“Um....I reached a point where I don’t know what to do.”

“Hmm? Oh, are you studying?”

“Yes. I am in the middle of a full review.”

Should’ve known it. I didn’t think that she would continue studying once she went home. My inner papa and mama were weeping. She doesn’t care for the subject, but she’s still giving it her all. There’s no need for me to worry after all. Why was I concerned in the first place? I don’t know.

That’s what was going on in my head while I wasn’t saying anything.

“Oh? So what problems are you having on a ‘full review’?”

“Let’s see. Problems 5-30 on the sheet you made yesterday.”

“Nearly all of it?!”

I should’ve known. Sorry, I’ll take those worries back.

Not yet. Things are alright. If she tackles these seriously, she’ll be able to do well somehow tomorrow. Getting a 100 might be impossible, but she could pass. It’ll be alright if she doesn’t lie down and we study together. It’s a bit

difficult to cram at the last minute for math, but as long as she memorizes the formulas, she should be able to solve the problems easily. It's alright.

"Don't worry, it's just a short review."

"Then let's get started now! Tell me what you don't know."

"Let's see..."

It was 03:00 before our general question and answer review ended.

"Okay, you should be fine now."

"Yes, I'll be fine. Tomorrow is a day where the Devilish Truth Stare is strong. Thus you need not worry. Hehehe."

Rikka sounded a bit sleepy and yawning. Nevertheless, it looks like she's still in a good mood. Or at least that eye is. As usual, I'm not sure how she knows about these powers it has.

"Sleepy? Shouldn't you go to bed? If you don't go to sleep, you won't be able to remember these formulas. You should go to sleep for a little bit after a late night session."

"I am a being from the demon world. There is no need for me to sleep."

And yet you yawned as you said that. This is too much. Even demon worlders need to sleep. Maybe you might have a dream if you go now.

"Well, I think you'll be fine if you really go to sleep now. Your re-test is after school. They'll get angry if you fall asleep during classes."

".....yeah."

"Then do your best tomorrow! Well, I'll hope that my prayers make it to you as well."

".....Yuuta's like that. I'll go lie down. See you tomorrow. Good night."

"Yeah. Night."

The phone call ended. Whew, I let out a deep breath.

"It's okay. It'll be fine somehow." I could let that out now that I was alone.

I began thinking about what to do tomorrow. Oh, perhaps I could get a gift for passing the long-awaited re-test. First could be that gum she likes. That reminds me, she wasn't pleading even once for it today. Well, maybe the gum doesn't signal celebration enough. Maybe a lunch would be better. Ah, cutlet sounds good. Do we have any here? Well, if we don't something frozen should be fine.

I was thinking about those kinds of things for about an hour on my bed until I fell asleep.

Then tomorrow came. The day of her re-test.

Rikka didn't come to school.

Chapter 12 : Absolute Absolute

I noticed something unusual when I arrived at school. Usually I see Rikka's doll-like presence sitting in front of me reading a book, but this time was a bit different.

Huh? She's not here yet? It seemed odd. While we were up late last night, I don't think she would be the type to sleep in.

After then, I became very anxious to see Rikka's figure. As my anxiety grew so did the number of times I checked my watch. Eventually, the bell that sounded for students to go to their classrooms sounded. Rikka was nowhere to be seen.

What's going on? Did she escape.....?

No, it can't be. Rikka was studying as if her life depended on it yesterday. There's no way she'd escape after that.

But what's going on....My anxiety continued to grow. I was a little bit hesitant to say that she could still be walking to school, but I couldn't be sure of anything. Things that I wanted to and didn't want to believe kept going around in my head. This classroom is noisy. Well, I guess if I make a phone call, no one could say I didn't try. So I called Rikka.

"....."

No reply. What if something happened? There might be a chance she really wouldn't come today. Damn it, what should I do?

Well, I've only got one thing that I could do. I have to search for her. Wait, I'm already starting to act like her. I don't care if I miss classes. I stood up alone, and began to leave the classroom.

"Togashi."

Someone called out and stopped me. I turned around and saw Isshiki.

“What’s going on man? You know classes are about to start.”

I know that. But I can’t give you an answer. This whole thing has shocked me stiff.

“Well I don’t really need to ask you what’s going on. I’ve got the gist of what’s happening, but I am a disciplinary council member. I’ve got no choice but to warn you.”

Definitely a determined guy.

“Is it Takanashi-san? I can’t think of any other reason why you’d dash out like that. This is the first time I’ve not seen her in the classroom. Is she taking a break or....What happened?”

“I don’t know. That’s why I’ve got to search for her. Sorry, but trying to stop me is useless.”

“.....Well aren’t you showing off how you climbed up those steps of love. Look, take this.”

What he tossed over was a key to a bike lock.

“.....Huh? What’s this?”

“You don’t know? Discipline isn’t just about checking uniforms if they’re regulation or not. They should protect all order. Didn’t I say that before? Don’t disarrange the pure relationships between guys and girls. If I tried to stop you here, then you’d want to disrupt that order. So for the sake of protecting the guys and girls in our class, I’ll lend you this.”

.....That’s Isshiki. My best friend.

“Don’t give me a warning.”

“Hmm, I know you’ll to go where Takanashi-san is located and do whatever it takes to get there, so I wanted to help you out.”

“What’s this? You’re sounding pretty cool, aren’t you.....”

It feels like my feminine side has fallen for him. It sounded good when I was saying something like that.

“Well, that doesn’t mean you’re the only climber of those steps. There’s others out there you know. You’re just the one that’s currently on the grounds. I got to check for safety, but I’ll leave this to you.”

If my feminine side can comment again, this part wasn’t that cool. But that’s alright, I am a guy. Isshiki’s funny lines did help loosen my stiffness a bit.

Isshiki had urged me on after rambling. “Anyways, stop complaining and get going! Go find Takanashi-san and then bring her back with you. Doesn’t she have a re-test?”

“Th, Thank you.”

“Just don’t run in the hallways man.”

Can’t forget his role as a disciplinary council member, huh? My mental state was saved by his seriousness. I had regained my composure while he was talking.

I began walking through the school with the speed of someone who was late. When I was about to go down the stairs, I ran into Nana-chan.

“Oh my, aren’t classes starting soon Togashi-kun?”

“Sorry Nana-chan, but I’ve got to leave early.”

Nana-chan had turned her head in confusion, but seemed to understand as she commented. “Hmm, there’s a certain fiery spirit in you that I’ve not seen before! Is there a certain reason? Well, be careful and come back safely!”

How am I surrounded by so many sweet people? Man, they’ve really helped me out lately.

“Yes! Thank you very much!”

After getting by Nana-chan, I made my way towards the bike racks. As soon as I stepped outside, I started running. I had to search for the ladies bike Isshiki usually rides. I was a bit hesitant to get on his beloved bike, but we don’t have any spare time. Though it didn’t have any special characteristics, I was able to find his bike quite quickly.

Not wanting to scratch it, I pulled it out safely from the racks, and lowered the seat. It was a bit high; he probably didn’t expect to lend it out. Stepping on the pedal, I was able to get over the side and use the power I had saved up earlier.

This ladies bike flew down the street. It was about half past eight, so there weren’t many people on the sidewalks. There were some late students, but I passed them by. I kept pedaling at max speed. My destination: Rikka’s apartment.

Wait for me Rikka, I’ll definitely find you.

I reached Rikka’s apartment pretty quickly. While I was catching my breath, I put Isshiki’s bike away without permission to park it and headed towards Rikka’s room.

I don’t know if she’s here or not, but I have to knock on her door to at least try.

“Rikka, are you in there? If you are, please open the door.”

I called out a few times, but I never got a response. Maybe she’s not here. Where else could she be? Did we miss each other on the street?

.....Oh well, I can’t look through every nook and cranny here. I began to walk back to Isshiki’s bike when I saw Rikka’s door open.

“.....Yuuta.....?”

It only opened a little, but I could see Rikka through the opening. Come on, you’ve made me worry so much already. But everything’s alright. She’s here.

But that face doesn’t look like Rikka at all. This dark, depressed face doesn’t look like she usually does.

“Oh, you’re here. You’ve made me worry. What’s going on?”

“.....”

She kept her mouth shut just like on the day of the class trip. I gazed at her vacant eyes. I got the sense that there was something else at play beside she couldn’t get any sleep.

“Um....Okay. Would it be alright if I came in for a bit?”

“.....Come in.”

And the door opened widely so I could head inside.

As the curtains were shut, the room itself was dark. I could see Rikka wearing her uniform. She had on her usual bandages she wore, but the eyepatch wasn’t attached. Today the Devilish Truth Stare was already shining.

Is that why she didn’t come to school.....?

I stopped at the front entrance. I couldn't move any further. It felt like I would be rejected if I went further. Rikka also stayed at the entranceway, but she was constantly looking downward.

"What's going on today?"

"....."

No response. All she did was continue to look down.

"Are you sleepy? If you are, that's alright. I won't get mad."

".....It's not that."

For the first time I heard her voice again. There was no affection in it. It sounded lonely.

Gradually, the atmosphere grew thick. What should I do.....?

"Are you not looking forward to the re-test?"

".....It's not that."

"Do you want to escape?"

"It's not that."

"Then, what's going on?"

Silence engulfed us for a while. I don't know how long it would hold us. It felt suffocating. Finally, Rikka, still looking down, commented in a small voice.

".....I don't know."

"Huh? What don't you know?"

Silence took over again. Rikka continued to look down as she was pondering the situation. What she was pondering, I don't know. This is irritating.

I might be able to know what she was talking about if she would just say something.

Then, she commented about what she didn't know.

"I don't know.... I just don't know...These feelings... Why, why do I have these feelings... Yuuta, ...I'm sorry.....I'm so sorry....."

Rikka couldn't look at me while she was apologizing. Her voice was shaking.

To that shaking voice, I had to ask, "Rikka.....?"

"What should I do....."

She continued for a moment before crying out loud.

"What....how did.... How did it get like this... I...I don't know....!"

To be correct, she shouted out loud. She brought her tiny hands to cover the tears she was crying.

"I don't know anything.....! I thought I could go to school, but my legs wouldn't move.....! I don't know. It's so scary.... Yes, it's really.....terrifying!"

Just like tears kept leaking out of her eyes, she couldn't stop talking.

"I thought I could do my best with Yu, Yuuta, and I'd be alright...! I, I thought I'd get a perfect score! But, but! Once this re-test is over, everything is over.... That's.....scary....It's so scary... I couldn't leave....!"

As if they were hiding behind her eyes, Rikka's tears kept coming. I began thinking of how to reply to her list, one-by-one.

"I.... inherited this power from my father..... But then..... up until now anyone who knew hated me.... I wanted someone to understand.....this Devilish

Truth Stare....but...but Yuuta was different....only Yuuta would....listen to everything.....not laugh.....and would sympathize!”

Rikka confessed her past. Bit-by-bit, she stored every one of those emotions until they were this strong.

“That’s why today....once the re-test is over, and the study sessions are no more... I’ll be alone again....Yuuta won’t.... be my contractee anymore....Yuuta will disappear in front of me.....”

I don’t think so. There’s no way I’d disappear from Rikka.

I need to let her know this. Now. Though I couldn’t pick the right words, I had to share these feelings.

But I couldn’t say anything. My shoulders kept shaking with all my might while she kept crying.

“Oooh....so...sorry....Yuuta... I said I’d do my best....I said I’d get a perfect score....”

It’s alright. I won’t get angry at you.

“I...I....”

She kept wiping away her tears that wouldn’t end and kept apologizing. There’s nothing for you to apologize for. I would like to say something too, but I couldn’t say anything at all.

Oh yeah. I should tell her those words, shouldn’t I? I thought I’d do my best, and give her support while I was wrapped up in these emotions. Maybe they would have an effect. I want to be with you, and then I’d tell her that I really like her. I’ve not once said those words to anyone.

“I’m sorry.... Yuuta, I’m sorry! You saw me study lots, and lots... You saw me when we were together.... You were always so kind to me....!”

Now that she's properly communicated her loneliness, it looks like now her tears are stopping.

I have to say something now. Does she have the same feelings....that I do?

"Rikka."

As I called out to her, I went from the entranceway into the main room. I went straight to her desk and pulled out a pen. Of course,

"Rikka, look at this. It's the security fragment! Did you forget what you said? Wasn't it permanent magic? You know what permanent means? It'll last forever. It won't disappear. Though it might get pale, though it might vanish, it'll still be there. So what are you worried about! I'll spend my whole life being next to you! No, I want to spend my life being next to you!"

Rikka looked dumbfounded at the newly drawn "yu" on the back of my hand. Again, many tears began to fall down her face. Her eyes continued to have that sorrow in them.

....That's right, I was once diagnosed with chuunibyou.

I also know what it means to not have anyone around me. I know how painful that feels. And yet, though I knew this, I didn't set my attention towards being a compassionate person. I was incapacitated.

Will this delay her recovery? Who cares? The most important part is having someone around who understands you. One who doesn't care about the disease.

After all, I like everything about Rikka. Of course I really like the chuunibyou side of her.

“So I’ll use my own contracting power to fix what you’re afraid of. Watch as my flames of darkness unlock the final mystery. Agapenikku Over Burst!”

That’s chuunibyou if I say so myself. I think those lines were quite fitting.

Once again, I took a deep breath and then continued.

“And so it is released. I really like you, Rikka. I love you. That’s why I want to spend my life beside you. We’ll always be together! It’ll never end. I vow to be beside you until the end of time. That’s my promise!”

But this emotion doesn’t come from chuunibyou. It’s from my own confidence. Eternity. It sounds nice, doesn’t it? I’ll definitely make that happen.

Rikka, still crying, looked up at my face. Gold and black mis-matched eyes looked at me with tears falling like she was someone who just lost a job.

“Oooo, Yuuta...Yuuta....”

“Rikka, you’ll never be alone again. Oh, one more thing. Did you know everyone in our class is really sweet? You should let them know about your powers like you told me. Isshiki already knows about them. Kannagi-san knows too. It’d lighten the atmosphere some, wouldn’t it? As for Nibutani, well, I’m sure she’ll join with us one day.”

“Yea.....Yeah....!”

“Oh, we still have a science re-test to look forward to. We’ve got some more study sessions planned, don’t we? But that won’t signal the end of them. We’ve got finals coming up. Let’s see if we can raise your score to average! And also.... I’m not that good at English, so I’d appreciate it if you’d tutor me in that.”

“Yes.....!”

Rikka was responding positively as she cried.

“So, you see, we’ll always be together.”

I walked up to the teary Rikka and began stroking her glossy hair. It was only for a little while, but her tears stopped shortly afterwards. That’s good. I’d like Rikka to always, always be smiling.

“Yuuta, Yuutaaaa!”

“Oh, Whoa!”

Rikka jumped at me like she was a puppy. Shortly afterwards her body collapsed into me and I helped support her. Looking down, I could see her face. That small head looked up at me.

“Oooh, Yuutaa,.....I’m sorry..... I really like, I love you too.....! That’s why I didn’t want you to disappear....I want us to always be togetherrrr!”

“Yeah. It’ll be alright. My contract and your contract overlap so, like you said, it’s quite strong. Canceling it will be quite difficult.”

“Ooooh, Yuuta’s making fun of me.”

“Eh, no, not. That’s not what I meant! I mean it’s the strongest!”

“Naturally.....the Devilish Truth Stare is the strongest!” Crying, smiling, Rikka continued on. “.....Yuuta, Thank you.....Thank you....”

“Don’t cry, don’t cry. It’ll be alright. I’ll always be here for you.”

“Will you always be contracted to me.....?”

“Ah, I’ll always be your contractee.”

I suppose you could say that was a cool way to propose. It’d be embarrassing if I just say “thanks” back, so why not say this?

“So this means I’ll always be Rikka’s boyfriend.”



Of course my face reddened. Hers did too.

"I'm Yuuta's girlfriend.....?"

"Ye, Yes."

"Oh."

And then

I felt a warm sensation on my lips. For a moment I didn't know what was going on, but...

"This is proof that the contract is valid."

I too broke down crying. I was so happy. The person I liked had the same feelings I did. I was so happy.

"Th, Thank you, Rikka."

After saying that, I could feel the tears coming down my face. These were tears of happiness. They were proof of my happiness in this moment.

And then for a short while, we stayed close to each other, warming the other's body.



After an extravagantly short time, we began to talk about some things.

"Yuuta, do you remember asking me previously about why I chose to form a contract with you?"

"Ah, I remember now. It was really bothering me."

It was bothering me right now. After all, if I hadn't been in a contract with Rikka, we wouldn't be together right now.

"Oh, would you like to know? Be warned, there is a possibility you might become disillusioned."

"Is that so? It sounds scary, but I have to know. It's how we met after all. What kind of reason did you have?"

With a nod, Rikka continued the story.

"Do you remember the day where the list of students who were able to enroll into this school were posted?"

"That day? I remember it, but I don't remember a lot about what happened."

It was an awfully cold day. Just before the results were posted, it started to rain. The whole area was flooded with students in uniforms I didn't know and their parents. If I remember, I was the only one there for me.

"On that day Yuuta and I met."

"Really? Are you serious?!"

"Serious. On the day the results were posted, I was alone. But you spoke to me."

No, I don't remember that at all. I know that I'd definitely remember talking to a cute girl (especially with an eyepatch and bandages).

"Sorry, but I don't remember talking to a girl wearing an eyepatch before entering high school...."

"I didn't wear an eyepatch that day. The Devilish Truth Stare was calmed at that time."

“What kind of a power is it?!”

A new fable had already begun here. By calmed down, does she mean her eye wasn't golden?

“Huh. Sorry to ask you to tell me, but I really don't remember anything.....Sorry.....”

“It was inevitable you wouldn't remember me. I was in stealth mode, so remembering anything about me would be difficult.”

“Hearing you say that is a huge relief.....So what did I say to you?”

“On that day, before the results were posted, it began to rain. At that time, I was pleasantly beside Yuuta. Because I was beside you, I could hear you say ‘Let my powers of darkness make me pass!’”

“Huh?!”

I said something like that the first time we met? I completely forgot. How could something like that be erased from my memories.....

“Disillusioned?”

“Not at you, I'm disillusioned with how I acted! How could I say something like that!”

“After you said that, you did something kind to me. Even though I didn't bring an umbrella, you lent me yours. When I passed, you congratulated me. Yuuta was the only one to do that. I was happy, very happy.”

“So it was like that. Sorry for not remembering...”

I was probably so happy that my powers of darkness flared up..... Quite the embarrassing past I'm carrying around, isn't it?

“That's why I trailed you on the day of the entrance ceremony.”

“And then you found out about that?!”

“Yes, that is how I saw you saying that on the rooftop.”

“And that’s why you started to act like that when you got your test back, right?”

“That wasn’t acting. I really was ill. The Devilish Truth Stare was rampaging. The one who helped me through that was you. Ever since I first came to this school, you’ve been helping me.”

“....That makes me happy somehow. I’m glad to be a sympathizer.”

“Yes, I think so as well.”

Rikka nodded with an awfully serious look on her face. I probably nodded back with a shining face just like hers.

“So, we should get back to school now.”

“The re-test.....”

This was the perfectly normal Rikka who disliked school. As for me, this was relaxing.

“Didn’t you say that you studied a lot?”

“Yes.”

We began to get ready to leave. Rikka went into the changing room to replace her blouse since it got wet from her tears. I was nervous. I should have heard the sounds of someone changing clothes, but that was just a hallucination.

Rikka came out, said “Let’s go,” and sat against my back in the entrance way. When I looked at her pale face, I didn’t see her usual white cloth. The golden color was radiant due to her tears from crying a while ago.

"Huh, is it alright for you to go outside without your eyepatch?"

"It is not needed. The power has been sealed, so it is alright."

I see huh. If she says it's alright, then I suppose I'm at peace.

"Then, shall we go?"

"Yes."

This was the first time we went to school together. Rikka was running at full throttle happiness. The Devilish Truth Stare was not awakened. I don't think she'll ever be able to fully stop though. She'll probably tell me more and more stories from today onward.

Well, it's my responsibility to burden them. Nah, it's my eternal role. I wouldn't give this to anyone else. I'll always be by Rikka's side.

Final Chapter : She's Chuunibyou, but...

When we returned to school after the Rikka Escape Event (my own title), I was the one who got scolded. The disciplinary teacher saw me leaving campus and scolded me. "You skipped classes and left school!" After about an hour of lecturing me, he let me off with forgiveness. Since Rikka was just late to school, she got a lighter treatment. When I told that to Rikka, she smiled.

In return, she told me about her treatment that day. While I was being lectured, she went to the classroom late. Everyone, including the teacher, was frozen in shock. Well, I was too when I first saw her eye. I sense this is going to become a freezing ability.

But it looks like our class won't let this secret slip out. It's probably blown over like the event at the field trip. Without an eyepatch, mismatched eye colors, and bandages: what kind of dull person would say they were coming from the demon world looking like that? Only this active Evil Eye chuunibyou girl would.

Oh well. As long as she's alright and the eye is sealed, then I don't really have a problem with it. Well, it's Rikka, so she'll surely say it's alright.

Alright huh? So I'll have to protect her from anyone who makes fun of her for today. Granted, I don't think anyone in our class would do that. They might try to make fun of Nibutani, but they'll get a scary warning from her.

Incidentally, I asked Isshiki about the disciplinary teacher when I was checking with him about the golden eye thing.

"He's just that kind of person. Hell, I'd warn you about that. I'd be mad if you came in late. But why are you sorry about the golden eye? I'd rather caution you against how pretty that eye looks. That demon eye might have some charming powers on it."

And so our own discipline guy is a-okay. I'm relieved. He's the one likely to cause a strife saying it was violating some rule.

And then after school.

Our class, good ol' 1-3, was taking the math re-test. I was waiting in the classroom, as promised, for Rikka after sending her off. I'd pray for her, but she'd find out about ten minutes later when it was graded. Soon the end of the re-test was near.

As expected, ten minutes later I heard the door open.

After checking around to ensure it was only her, I went to the front of the room.

"What's going on?"

"Yuuta, look. Look!"

Bang! Her failing (15 points) answer sheet was spread out in front of me. Across from it, "Another re-test needed" was written. What was the whole "Look! Look!" about?

"It was an honest mistake."

Rikka had a "help me" expression. I gathered up my rebuttal power.

"There's no way a 15 is even close to a perfect 100. How is that an honest mistake?"

"I released the full power of the Devilish Truth Stare after it began, but controlling that power..."

"Your excuse is well-prepared!"

As usual, I went into training papa mode. No, I shouldn't get mad at her.

“Oh...Sorry about that.”

Now she was feeling horrible. Maybe I was too strong with my rebuttals. I know for sure she put in a great amount of effort for this.

“Well, you’ve got another re-test, don’t you? Do your best in studying from here on.”

“This is just an endless battle.”

No, re-tests do typically end. I could feel Nana-chan’s trust in me plummeting. Maybe it’s already plummeted. I’ll have to talk with her later about today. Sigh.

Coming down from the platform, Rikka looked like an angel coming over to me.

Rikka, Snow crystals.⁹

Mixed on her usual snow-like face was red, the sign of blushing. Perhaps it was embarrassment over her poor grade.

The pretty girl in front of me hasn’t recovered from her chuunibyou, but instead has melded me into her world. As for chuunibyou itself, that “evil practice” changed her, just like how snow melts.

Rikka may forever be infected with chuunibyou. She may make a full recovery. I don’t know which would happen.

⁹ The kanji for “Rikka” mean snow.

But it won't affect our relationship. The person I like is still in there. The person I protect is still in there. The person I always want to be with is still in there. It's just that my important person has fallen ill with chuunibyou.

But,

Chuunibyou isn't a bad thing.

Sure it might be a disorder that turns people into megalomaniacs.

People might get the wrong impression and think they'll live forever.

Well, for some it might be too late.

Reality changes for all of them in some shape or form.

But make no mistake, it's still present. That's why chuunibyou is the best!

Postscript

It is a pleasure to meet everyone. This is the person who thought the dodgeball left an imprint if you didn't avoid it, and current chuunibyou patient Torako.

First I'd like to thank everyone who picked up a copy of this book, *Chuunibyou Demo Koi ga Shitai!* Everyone, I really like you all. No, I love you all! I don't think I could possibly thank everyone, but I'll start from the beginning. Though I thought life was a little bit interesting, I was really happy to obtain my chuunibyou soul again. To be honest, this is take two of the postscript. This might be the first take two postscript ever written. YES! I began writing after a certain live show when my excitement was raised, but my excitement went overboard. I'll leave it to you to imagine what I was thinking!

To be frank (not holding anything back today), I love Kyoto Animation's anime works, and so it was a privilege to win the first Kyoto Animation Awards's Honorary Mention; a magnificent prize. But it was a true honor to hear it would be printed in novel form. That's too many for a single lifetime. As they made a special website for it, tears kept running down my eyes due to my happiness. I am indebted for all the cute drawings they added. Nozomi-sama's illustrations are so cute! I'm a huge fan. When I first saw the illustrations for Rikka and Shinka, I was so happy. (I'm embarrassed to admit I cried)

Now onto how this story came about. I've always liked the emotionless characters (though I get a bit uneasy when they start to talk properly) so I thought it would be fun if I began writing a story where one takes center stage. I then added an eyepatch, thought it would be cute, then added bandages too and then changed the eyepatch to fit the chuunibyou standard (of what I could remember from my past) and then the mysterious Rikka was born. The criminal who made her into an emotionless character and yet an idiotic girl was myself. I

combined portions of my dark past for both Rikka and Yuuta, so I guess you could say this work is my own dark history notebook. By the time I realized it, it was too late.

Well, the one thing that I wanted this work to portray to the world is happiness. The other thing is to not leave things undone. It's summer inside this work and somehow I didn't include a swimsuit scene! I'm an idiot! I'm sure Rikka would wear some kind of gothic Lolita swimsuit. I'd be greedy to say anymore than that

Finally, I'd like to give my thanks to the always busy editing staff. I thank you from the bottom of my heart. If they weren't here, this work would never have been published. And then the illustrations drawn by the busiest person ever, Nozomi-sama, were the best treasure I could get in a lifetime. I am truly thankful for all you've done. There's so many other people involved with this project and I'd like to thank them all too. Finally, a maximum amount of thanks to you, the readers.

-The absolute cutest hiragana is "yu"

Torako